

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Emma Peneku, 76, retired Dole Company (Hawaiian Pine Company) head matron

Emma (Hanaike) Peneku was born in Lihue, Kauai on November 21, 1902. She had two brothers, and a sister who died at age three. She is approximately five-eighths Hawaiian and three-eighths Caucasian, and understands some Hawaiian. Her father, a minister, died when Emma was seven. Her mother remarried a carpenter. Emma went to Lihue and Koloa Elementary Schools until she was 13 years old. Then she moved to Honolulu to attend Kamehameha School, graduating from the ninth grade in 1921 at age 19. That year, Emma moved back to Kauai and married Sam Peneku. Within ten years, she bore three girls and four boys.

In about 1925, the Penekus moved to Honolulu. Shortly thereafter, they bought a home on Colburn Street, but eventually had to give it up. In 1926, Emma worked for one day at Libby cannery packing pineapple. She did not do very well and was asked not to return. She did not seek outside work again until 1935. By 1935, the Penekus bought a home on Gulick Avenue. That year, Emma began working at Hawaiian Pineapple Company as a seasonal trimmer. After a few weeks, she became a matron in the women's locker room. In 1937, she became an intermittent. Emma was promoted to assistant head matron in about 1938 or 1939, and in about 1943, was made head matron. Emma became a regular, salaried worker in 1946. At age 65, she retired.

Mr. Peneku passed away in 1970. Emma sold the Gulick Avenue house in 1971 and moved twice before settling into an apartment where she now lives with her daughter and granddaughter.

Emma is presently active in Nichiren Shōshu and Kaumakapili Church. Her hobby is crocheting.

Tape No. 6-1-1-79  
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
with  
Emma Peneku (EP)  
February 15, 1979  
Honolulu, Hawaii  
BY: Vivien Lee (VL)

VL: This is an interview with Mrs. Emma Peneku. Today is February 15, 1979. We're at her home in Honolulu.

Maybe you can tell me first, just for the record, where you were born and when you were born.

EP: Oh, I was born in Lihue, on November 21, 1902.

VL: I remember you told me you went to Kamehameha School, when you were 13 years old till when you were 19.

EP: Yeah. Uh huh.

VL: Do you remember why you came to Honolulu to go to school?

EP: Well, they were taking Hawaiians. And so they put it in the paper, "Anybody with Hawaiian blood want to come to Kamehameha School, come." Because my great-grandfather knew Kamehameha the First, the Great. And he was Alexander Adams. So I guess Mother had it in her mind that she wanted to send us to....wait a minute, Dad was still alive when my two brothers came to Kamehameha.

VL: Oh, they went first?

EP: They went first. One went to Preparatory, the other went to the Manual Department, the big boys' school. And when he died, they wired, the boys came home, and they didn't finish. So William wanted to go to work with his uncle in town, so he came to Honolulu. And Joseph stayed home. We went to public school.

You see, I didn't go to no kindergarten or anything because I had a tutor in my house. There was a teacher that came from the Mainland, and she didn't approve to the school up in Lihue. I think the Filipinos were starting to come down (and people were afraid of them). So my dad offered that she can come live in our house with us. So she used to teach me, tutor me at home. I never went to

school till I was about eight, I think. And I only went a little bit and he passed away.

VL: Your dad?

EP: Yeah. So we came to Honolulu. I went to that school on School Street. Oh, I forgot the name. (Kauluwela). For little bit. Then my mother married a Kauai man again, so we went back to Kauai. This time, we moved our things from Lihue and we went to live in Koloa, on a big property that belonged to the Maiohos. My stepfather's father was the judge of Koloa. Prior to the time we went, he had died already. So we lived in their home lot until we got our homestead.

VL: So you went to school for a little while in Koloa, too?

EP: Yes. And well, I thought I was bright, you know. They even got me going up to the sixth grade, when I got sent to Kamehameha. Kamehameha started from fourth grade. So because I was in the sixth, they tried me in the fifth. I couldn't make it. So they knocked me down to the fourth. And from the fourth, I [eventually] went up to the ninth. That was the senior class.

VL: Did your stepfather and your mother want you to be anything? Did they have in mind that they wanted you to be something?

EP: They didn't so much as mention, but around the time I graduated, I had an uncle in town who was the detective in Honolulu. John Kellett. And he thought that I should go work at Liberty House because his sister was there. Well first, I was thinking maybe I'd like to be a nurse. But when I realized that I got to empty bedpans, ah, I gave up. Then I was going come Liberty House. I never got down here. I met my husband and that was it. Graduated in June and got married in December [1921].

VL: Uh huh. I'll ask about him in a minute. But first, what was your real father's occupation?

EP: He was everything. First, he was a Protestant minister in the Hawaiian tongue. Then he was a surveyor, land surveyor. He took care of taxes on Kauai. Then, oh, he did everything, that old man. He's a graduate of Lahainaluna. I think he came out of one of the first classes of Lahainaluna. Just a poor Hawaiian from Puna. He got sent up in Maui to school, and I think he came from one of the first classes from that school.

VL: How about your mother, did she work?

EP: No. Because when she was a little girl, she hurt her leg. But being that she married both Hawaiians she was brought up with the tongue. She can speak Hawaiian just as good, even better than the full blooded Hawaiians. I can't speak, but Mother did beautifully.

VL: And your stepfather, what did he do?

EP: Well, he was a carpenter. But most of the time, he didn't work. Because when my father died--I heard--he left something like \$27,000 in bonds and stocks in different places. He had something on the Onomea Sugar Company, and stuff like that. So the second father was really a working fool. And he used to work and work. We raised chickens, we had hundreds of chickens. Pigs. Up in the homestead there, we had sweet potato that he planted. Was to feed pigs but we get overload. He send it down to the Kamehameha School. Bananas. Oh, lot of chickens.

VL: Those days, there was tuition at Kamehameha Schools?

EP: Fifty dollars a year.

VL: Did you ever work while you were going to school there?

EP: No. I just did my regular---everybody had little jobs to do. They always called me "the busy lady" because I never was a good housekeeper.

VL: So your parents paid that \$50 tuition?

EP: Oh yes, uh huh.

VL: How did you meet your husband?

EP: Well, I knew he went Kamehameha. He said he also went to Kamehameha. And I knew him, then he went to the war [World War I], he came back, and then he got to be a purser or a freight clerk on the Kinau, the boat that goes to Kauai. Used to have two boats a week. So one night I go home [to Kauai] and I'm seasick and everything. And he come over there, help me. Pretty soon, we sat up all night talking. By the time we got to shore, there was Mother waiting for me. I introduced him to her. He had a girlfriend up there. Then he came to the homestead to visit me. And we got intimate.

VL: This was on your way back [home] from school? Back to Kauai?

EP: Yeah. After graduation. To Omao homestead [Koloa, Kauai].

VL: On Kauai, when you were first married, did you work at all up there?

EP: No. Those days, ladies didn't go to work. They stayed home take care the kids. Because in 10 years I had 7 children. And I was always busy washing diapers. Cooking and feeding them.

VL: And your husband's job was still as a purser?

EP: No, no. He got out. For a long time, he didn't have a job. Then



he get one letter from a friend, a Mr. Mullen, William Mullen, from Honolulu. He must have met this man, I don't know where. But Bill sent a letter out there and told Sam [EP's husband] to come in to Honolulu, that he was opening the Island Welding Shop. So he [Sam] was the first welder outside of the two haole brothers that owned the place. Sam became a welder.

VL: But on Kauai he had no job?

EP: Well, he was a plantation luna for a little bit [McBryde Plantation, Eleele). We moved away from Mother for a little while and lived on the plantation. Oh, I didn't like it there. So my mother said, "Come home." And so we moved back, and we stayed there until he got this letter to come. So he came along ahead. See, we had no money so Mother gave him little bit money. He got up here. And I was almost having the third baby, so I wanted to be with him when I have the baby, so I came to Honolulu. Then Sam [her third baby] was born up---he came here and went to live with my brother Bill in Pua Lane. I come out and we lived there for a little bit. Then we bought a piece of property at 1627 Colburn Street. You see, my father still had some estate money left, so that gave us down payment. But somehow, there never was enough money, I guess, we lost the place. So we rented around until we got to Gulick Avenue.

VL: The time that you first tried working at Libby's, in 1926, you had how many children already?

EP: Let's see. That time, Sam was born.

VL: Sam is your number...?

EP: Three. But number four was born on Colburn Street.

VL: So three or four children?

EP: Yeah.

VL: Why did you decide to go to work?

EP: Because I needed money, and people said that was easy. And the cannery was right near. You just walk down to the cannery. So I went down, they put me to work. But they put me on the packing side, and I couldn't pack right. Every time the forelady came, she emptied all those things [cans], put it back, and she said, "Try again." She said, "This is the texture of the pine and stuff." I don't know if I couldn't see or....not too bright, that's what it was. So by the end of the day, she said I didn't have to come back next day. "Just come in Thursday for your pay." And I went Thursday, and got two big silver dollars and 81 cents.

VL: Was it easy to get that job?

EP: Oh, that wasn't too hard. I just went down. They were short of workers, they picked me up.

VL: Was it summertime?

EP: Yeah.

VL: Did you have to fill out an application or anything?

EP: No, I don't remember that I did. They just pulled us in, you know.

VL: So you needed the money?

EP: Oh yes. Well, if I needed the money then, it was worse when I started [to work again] in 1935.

VL: You didn't work in between 1926 and 1935?

EP: No.

VL: How come so long?

EP: Oh well, we just hand to mouth. And oh, Mother moved down here, she sold the [Kauai] homestead. And then, while she was around-- oh, I don't know, it's terrible to say--at that time, anybody making \$1 an hour was rich. And he was making \$1 an hour.

VL: Your husband?

EP: Uh huh [yes].

VL: So your finances got a little bit better?

EP: Yeah, with Mother around. Then she bought her own place and moved out and lived by herself.

VL: You said, "Things got better with her around." Does that mean she had some money?

EP: Oh yes. She sold the homestead and she came down. She had money. So she was with us. She paid our back rent, and things like that. They didn't call it "rent" those days. We was buying the place-- installments.

VL: After that one day at Libby's, did you try to go to a different cannery?

EP: No, no. I just took the cannery right off my mind. Until 1935.

VL: Did you think about other jobs that you could do?

EP: No, I couldn't. There was so much to do at home. By the time

getting the kids off to school in the morning, and stuff like that. I didn't think of any other thing until....until I met this lady at a party I went to. And she said, "Why don't you come work cannery?" I was introduced to Hattie Aki [Hawaiian Pine Company head matron, at the time]. My sister-in-law asked me to this party, cannery party. So we went.

VL: Was that your sister-in-law Vicky Hanaike?

EP: Uh huh [yes].

VL: And she was already working at...

EP: Oh yes. Yeah, she was working. She put in 40 years [by the time she retired]. I think. And so, I met this lady at a party, and she said, "Eh, why don't you come to work?"

I said, "How?"

She said, "Oh, I think I'm going to need a matron pretty soon."

So I went. No car fare. I walked from Gulick Avenue down there. I think I went down three or four mornings. Then, the last morning I went down there, Kanky Chun, who was the head timekeeper, he knew I was Vicky's sister-in-law. So he came in and he said, "How come they not picking you up?"

I said, "I don't know."

So he gave me a bango. You know what it is, eh? The number. And he said, "Here. You can go home. Come tomorrow morning and get right in line for work."

The next morning, I went down put on an apron and everything, went to work. Vicky was there, she was big boss on the trimming department. So she sent a forelady by my side and teach me all day, how to trim, hold the pineapple, roll the pineapple, and all that. And I was just learning pretty good.

Then Hattie, I go up to lunch, and she said, "Eh, I want you to come relieve lunch period, help open lockers." Then I got in with them. Then, all matrons had free lunch, so I was in the gang. And after lunch, the girls all go back to work. The matrons check lockers. Of course, they had janitress--Japanese ladies--cleaning the floor. And then we wipe silver. And after that I go back to the [trimming] table. Just for a few days. Then one matron quit and I became a matron.

VL: So how long were you trimming before you became a matron?

EP: Not long. Maybe two, three weeks. That's why I not so good with the pineapple now, if I would try to trim. Because there's an art to rolling the pineapple.

VL: Those first three days when you went down to try and get that job...

EP: There was a Mr. [Marshall] Hjelte, one big haole. And he'd come and stand on the top of the steps and look around. He said, "You, you." And then, the rest go home.

VL: How many of you would be standing there?

EP: Oh, about 50, sometime 100. Summer time, we get as many as 6,000 come in. Oh, there's another thing. I went up fast, I think, to be a matron because the other matron, her files was all humbug. So I went and there was another lady that was already a matron--Louise Kaleiki--between she and me, we built up the files and put everybody in their place. Two, three ladies to a locker, because we didn't have the back section [there were more lockers after back section was built]. We only had about 500 or 600 lockers in a big section. You put four people in one locker. They just put their gloves in, and their caps. Supposed to take the apron home and wash it. But their handbags and everything are in it. And each of us carry a pass key. And one girl, the top on the card is given the key to the locker. For the other three, we got to open.

VL: Wait now. Let me go back a little bit. Going back to the days that you were waiting to be chosen, why did you go to Hawaiian Pine?

EP: Because Libby didn't want me after I tried with them. And they were closer to me. I was still living in the same house. They were closer to me, but they told me, "Don't have to come back anymore." So why go back there?

VL: Even if that was eight years earlier?

EP: Yeah. Oh, wait a minute, I wasn't living there. But when they tell you, "Don't come back," well, no matter how many years between, you not going back to the same place after they sort of kick you out, eh? Then, I was living on Gulick Avenue when I went to work for Dole.

VL: You have any idea why you weren't chosen those three days that you went?

EP: Yeah, because I was Hawaiian. Big. The guy, he passed a remark. Somebody said, "Eh, Vicky's sister-in-law."

He [Mr. Hjelte] said, "Ah, those Hawaiians, they lazy."

VL: Did you hear him say that?

EP: No, no. Somebody told me that that was his attitude. That's why he used to take the smaller ones first. There was a lot of old time heavy ladies, but they were there already. Like we had a big

Mexican lady there. But she was a good trimmer and everything. But this Chinese guy [Kanky Chun], he felt sorry for me. Wonderful man, that is. He lives right up there.

VL: Could he have gotten into trouble for giving you that bango?

EP: No, he's a big deal. He was the head timekeeper there.

VL: Was he over Mr. Hjelte [in rank]?

EP: No, [Chun] he's superintendent in his own, Hjelte was....I don't know what he was....department supe [superintendent], I think. Hjelte was, on the day shift. That was Vicky's top boss. And this timekeeper, he managed everybody. He saw that everybody got their time in properly. Usually, the University kids, Punahou kids come down work for the summertime.

VL: So if it wasn't for him, do you think maybe you wouldn't have gotten hired?

EP: Well, if I kept on going. But I was getting kind of tired of going. To get down there. But he really saved me.

VL: When you went down there those three mornings, how long did you have to stand around?

EP: A matter of a few minutes. Maybe 15, 20 minutes. Then he'd send everybody else go home. He'd come out when he'd feel like and just stand up, point out different ones he wanted. So many, like if he need 20, he count 20 heads. And I never got in the line of the 20 heads.

VL: He chose mostly what kind of people?

EP: Japanese.

VL: When you first were learning trimming, how did you like it?

EP: Oh, I didn't. But I thought, well, if that was going to be my job, I better knuckle down. And I go home and the kids get naughty, I tell 'em, "Eh, I working hard out there. You folks help me wash the dishes."

VL: So when you were first trimming, what shift was that?

EP: The day shift.

VL: How many hours?

EP: Oh gee, I don't think I stayed all day too many times. Well, there's times in the summer time that they run up 12 hours. Then they knock the shifts, three shifts. But the night shift, I got that when I came matron. I was assistant head to the head, but

nighttime, she go home. I'm the head. And run the night shift. Them days, we had the train bringing the pineapple. But when I got there, I fixed up rest periods for the matrons.

VL: Okay, now we come up to when you became matron. When you first started, you would go back to the trimming table after you did the matron?

EP: Yeah. I can come out half an hour before---say 10:30 because we eat 11:00. I come up 10:30 and check up on things. The girls come up to open lockers and stuff like that. And through the whole period. Even after I started to wear uniforms, when I go home, the kids know I'm coming home. They smell pineapple, and I wasn't even handling pineapple. But the ladies, they come up with good uniforms. And them days was Indian head white uniforms.

VL: What is that?

EP: It's material. It's the heavy white. And we didn't have washing machines. So you go home and wash your uniform every day. I only had two. One nice Japanese lady, my friend, when I told her I was going to be matron, she made me my uniform.

VL: So just after a few weeks you became always matron?

EP: Yeah.

VL: Do you think that if you hadn't known that lady there [Hattie Aki]...

EP: It wouldn't interest me. You know what I mean? We had a good time at this party. And she said, "Come work." Before that, I never thought of ever going back to pineapple. Vicky didn't do too much good, she never encouraged me. She used to come my house. She didn't care for us, I think, much. Bill [EP's brother] called me yesterday. She's [Vicky] fine.

VL: If you had to stay trimming all the time...

EP: Oh, I'd have quit. Yeah. I couldn't take it. Not with all that weight. Oh, my God.

VL: You mean the weight of the pine?

EP: That's right.

VL: What i s t h e worse thing that you didn't like about trimming?

EP: I couldn't roll 'em fast enough. Everybody would put [i.e., trim] maybe five, six pineapples to my one. I was too slow doing that.

VL: So you were glad when you got to be matron?

EP: Well, at 25 cents an hour, that was pretty good. Some guys was

making 15 cents, I think.

VL: Matrons were paid more than trimmers?

EP: Yeah. When the head matron quit, she was getting 67 cents. And my boss gave me 70 cents [approximately 1942 or 1943, EP became head matron]. That time, we didn't have union, so we stayed down in the cents until the union started. Then they put us on salary. That's when Vicky, all us, all that foreladies.

VL: So from about 1935 you were matron?

EP: Yeah, that's when I first went. Then what happened after that? Then came a slack, I stayed home. And then, we used to get compensation.

VL: Back then?

EP: Yeah. I got about, oh, about \$12 a week compensation.

VL: Did they have a name for your job category? Like "non-regular"?

EP: Yeah, yeah. They called us "seasonals." Until we became Intermittent. Then, when you come Regular, that means eight hours a day or more. But 40 hours a week, that would be Regular.

VL: So even before the union came, they had those labels?

EP: Yeah.

VL: So now, when you first became matron, how many other matrons were there?

EP: About seven, I think. Seven, eight.

VL: And one head matron?

EP: One head, one assistant. There was Rose Papa, her [Hattie Aki's] assistant. But when I got into the matron gang, she was assistant head. She wen ask Miss Ward for one job up Waimano Home. I later heard that.... see, they started to make the employment big. So for a while, Mr. Cooper and his gang came in....

(Visitor arrives. Taping stops, then resumes.)

VL: So when you first became matron, did someone train you? Tell you how to do your job?

EP: Yeah, head matron. She just tell me what I'm supposed to do.

VL: What were you supposed to do?

EP: Open lockers.



VL: When?

EP: You report for work half an hour before the cannery run.

VL: You do?

EP: Yeah. All the matrons come in. And for a while we had punch clock. And we used to report for work, get down the aisles, see that the--you know, you got to learn the different people so nobody go in somebody's locker take something. Because sometimes now, if we rooming together, I got the key, I leave it open for you but another girl might come around and get it. So you have to be on alert all the time. Then you get to know the girls and you know if you see one in the wrong place. Pull 'em on the side, "What you doing over there?" Which was very seldom that I ever had to do that.

I stopped couple of fights. Before I went to work, I heard she [Hattie] had 'em. She stopped a fight and she went "zoom." She was big fat lady, too. Not as tall as me. This is Mrs. Aki. Somebody told me that one day there was a big fight. There was a Tripp lady over there. Strong wahine. Mrs. Tripp. I don't know her first name now, I forget. And she had a fight with somebody one day and---see, I took up scouting when I was in school. Then they teach you, somebody gets into a fight, how to break the fight. Don't get in the middle and get punched. You pick the stronger guy of the two, whoever's fighting, and swing 'em around with their hands behind. That's what she [Hattie] should have done, but no, this lady catch her good and gave her one swing, she fall on the floor and slide. We had cement floors. I don't know if she got hurt, this is only what I heard. I didn't see.

But one day, there was a good fight coming up. We got a ramp, and the girls come up. One gang going down, another gang come up. And two girls was fighting. Then, I used to wear glasses with no rims. I took off my glasses off and I threw it like that. One other girl happened to catch it. If she didn't, oh, I'd have been in trouble. And I grabbed the stronger of the girls, the bigger one of the two fighting. So I told 'em, "Stay home, don't come back tomorrow."

VL: What were they fighting about?

EP: I don't know. About the trimming maybe. I didn't even start to find out what they was fighting about. But I said, "That's un-called for. You don't act that way in a place like this."

VL: So did you have the authority to tell people not to come back?

EP: Well, no. I didn't have the authority. But I did it. Instead of going get Hjelte and come up, and then he take 'em down for a talk and I would just say, "You feel better? You stay home one day, you feel better and you come back to work."

Then, when they fail to come in, the timekeeper came and said, "Eh, the two girls that fought, what happened to them?"

I said, "They can't get along here. Let 'em stay home, breeze it off. When they come back, they might feel better."

They came back, didn't take long when I got them to be friends. Talk to each, what I did.

VL: Did that happen when you were head matron?

EP: Uh huh [yes].

VL: Before you became head matron, what else did you have to do? Like in the very beginning, when you were just learning the matron job.

EP: Oh, well we used to make sandwiches in the morning. If you on the day shift, all the matrons go to the cafeteria and we make sandwiches for two hours, I think. The cooks get all the mixtures ready, we built the sandwiches. Okay, then the lunch period comes up. When the cannery's full we have two lunch periods. There's a 2,000 capacity in the cafeteria. But we had big lunch warmers in our locker room, where you bring your own lunch, put it in there warm it up.

That's another thing, people used to steal one another's lunch in there.

And after lunch, everybody go back, you go back check lockers, make sure every locker is locked. Then we all go out to the washing area and wipe silver.

VL: In the cafeteria?

EP: Yeah. In those days, when I first went, the boys that used to work in the cafeteria did the dishwashing. But after a while, they put up the dishwashing machines where you just put the dishes in. Everybody come down the cafeteria with a tray. I used to go inside help unset tables. We were just like a part of the cafeteria because Mr. [Percy] Levey who ran the cafeteria was our top boss at the time. Over the head matron. He was in charge of all the matrons, and that's why we worked for him. Make the sandwiches and wipe the silver. And then, we get free meals. Them days, a big plate of stew was only 10 cents. But I got it free because I worked in the cafeteria.

VL: So wiping silver and so on was part of your job as matron?

EP: Yeah.

VL: Anything else was part of your job?

EP: No. Outside of the locker room, that was it. Oh, we had a matron

that used to take care five restrooms down at the table section. They got five restrooms. But now, when girls need pads, they don't go down there because the toilets all open. So there's a matron to go up and see that they don't over-sit their time. The matron come down and she....you can tell who belongs where. Then you go upstairs, sometimes they smoking and talking up there. Talk stories, you know. So she say, "Eh, come back to the table." Well, we had that kind matron too, but Preparation [Department] was in charge of that matron. That one didn't wipe silver and make sandwiches because she was busy down there. So she paid for her meals.

VL: So then, after you finished wiping silver, what was there for you to do in the afternoon?

EP: Oh, come back because girls keep on coming up. Sell pads. And then, later on, I put on pad machines. Then the nickels would get stuck, oh my God. Then we'd go to the storeroom to get pads. Or I phone out order and they send it up. I had my desk way down over there. There was a little thing with all the changes [coins] from the pads. I turn it in to the storeroom.

Then, when people lose their jewelry and stuff, they bring it up. Then the girls come back, "I lost this," and "I lost that." I make 'em tell me what it is, what it looks like and everything, and if I think that that certain stuff has been turned in--I got to know the girl is honest. Because some of them wore good jewelry. And I'd give 'em to 'em.

Like this little--well, she's a lady now, that's a head matron now, according to Clara [De Costa--EP's neighbor and Dole trimmer], she doesn't do too much. But I guess she takes care of the files. That was the main thing, you had to know where people belonged.

VL: What is this file? Can you describe what that was?

EP: Oh, just like your bank file. You got all the lockers with a stand-up card, and who's in the locker. You put their name and their number.

VL: Each locker has a number, so that number's written on the card?

EP: Yeah. Right. I forget what year it was that they put up lockers in the back section of the locker room. And they were double lockers. So I had to get out there and teach combinations. Oh, that kept me busy because some people hard to catch on. And sometimes they come and they want to open their lockers. "Don't you know your number?"

"I know my number but I can't get it to work."

I work their number, the thing open, they surprised. They look at me, I say, "You have to learn how to open. You turn this dial two

times, straight around. Stop at the first number, come back past the first number, stop at the second, turn right, open." That's how I used to teach 'em.

VL: So before that, they had the keys. And you had one key?

EP: Yeah. Every matron had a master key to open all.

VL: One key that would fit everything?

EP: Yeah. We had a bunch of keys and oh, God, don't lose your keys. Some of them, they drop and lose their keys.

VL: Then what happened?

EP: That was dangerous because people get into lockers and the girls complained, they missing things. Oh, that's nothing. They don't mark their lunches when they put 'em in the heaters. Then somebody come and say, "Oh, somebody took my lunch." This is what I hate.

VL: What can you do?

EP: I walk 'em down with me. We go in and out the lockers, everybody sitting down eating. And then the girl says, "She's eating my lunch."

The other one that's eating say, "Oh, excuse. I never know was your lunch. I didn't have no money, I hungry."

Then I put up change or something, "Go cafeteria." I tell that girl "Wash that thing and put it back. You shouldn't do that. If you needed lunch money, why don't you come to me?" I always get change. And if I run out of change, I use the kotex change. I build it up and I pay. But I didn't want anybody go without lunch.

VL: So you would lend them money?

EP: Yeah. Some of them, they bring it back. But them days, little change was nothing.

VL: You said sometimes they had four girls to one locker?

EP: Before we had the back section. Well, there was room for four sets of gloves on the door. That's the main thing. Then there's a pocket in each locker, with the girl's name. And like the matrons go down and she'll [a girl will] say, "Open this locker." You open the locker, you pick up the card and find out if the numbers match. The bango. If you feel like asking them the name okay....but if the bango has a different number, "What you want in this locker, it isn't yours?"

"Ah, but that's my friend. I put my stuff in the locker."

"Get your friend." Because....well, now they stealing worse than ever, but they did a little in those days.

VL: What would women put in their lockers?

EP: Their purses. And they weren't allowed to wear jewelry downstairs. And everybody had to wear shoes to go downstairs. No slippers like today. Now, I don't know. I meant to ask Clara if they allowed slippers now.

VL: Would some women change clothes and wear different clothes?

EP: Uh huh. Some of them. And some of them take showers. We got a whole line of showers. Something like 27 toilets or so, in one section.

VL: Did they have doors?

EP: No, curtains on the showers. But every toilet had a door. Because you go in there and change your pad, eh. And then I had the plumbers up there every time I had trouble. Them days, they never have this kind thing you pour in a toilet or sink. So the plumbers would come up and change all those things.

VL: They weren't supposed to flush those pads down the toilet?

EP: Yeah. But they did, a lot of them. If the toilet all stuck, we got to get the plumber.

VL: Was there enough room in the locker for four girls' things?

EP: Yeah, they managed. Usually, I let friends share lockers. But eh, when the hiring gang come on, summertime, when we run two and three, like two shifts, full house, 48 tables. And there's I think 35 or 38 people at one half, and the other half of the table. One side is trim, the other side is pack. Wow!

When the employment office send those guys up [to the locker room]. And they all stand in line and you got to go full speed. We work on note books. Then bumbai, put on the cards and fix the file.

VL: They all have got to have lockers?

EP: Yeah, everybody gets a locker because the company owns the gloves. You pay for apron and cap but you don't pay for gloves. And the gloves those days was expensive. And then we had a glove room. There were glove girls that go out and see if you got a puka glove. Because lot of people get the itch from the pineapple. And we had a nice dispensary.

VL: Was that up in the locker room also?

EP: No, no. Downstairs.

VL: So the locker was mainly for their gloves, then?

EP: Yeah, that's right.

VL: And in the summertime, did you have enough lockers?

EP: Well, that's why we crowd 'em. Everybody had to have a locker for the gloves, at least.

Since the day I retired, I never went back to the cannery. Later, I got transferred. Another boss took over. Then they called us the "Utility Department" like. Where there were men and the locker room. One guy in charge. Then we had the yard man. Have you ever been down Hawaiian Pine?

VL: Uh huh [yes].

EP: When you come by the employment office--I don't know if it's still up--you know that place where they park cars now was beautiful grass. We had hedges around. This Mr. [Abel] Ferreira, that was the boss down there. He had yard men and all that.

VL: You said that the filing system when you got there was out of order?

EP: Yeah, I set the filing. Well, yeah, wasn't taken care of. And lot of people would say, "Oh, I belong in this locker."

"Your name's not on the card." Then you got to go back in the book and find out where she was first registered. So I got that straightened out. Then the war came on.

VL: You said, "Only one person had the key." How did they decide which one of the four would get the key?

EP: Usually the company. Like we pick up guys. I tell you pick out friends who you want--usually it's two, but some will come and say, "Just one more friend." The first girl that comes gets the key. And if they all together when they come in to work, that girl would open the locker and they all get their things put away and be sure the locker is locked. It's a real order to go down and check lockers. Sometimes you find 'em open, they forget lock it. So you lock it. But now, with the combinations, you just twirl it.

Then there was also....shee, I had warehouse restroom, foreladies restroom, garage restroom. Then we had the candy factory [during World War II], restroom there, and the main restroom.

VL: And what about that?

EP: Wherever ladies worked, there was a restroom, and I took care of all that. Of course, I had a matron in each place.

VL: This was after you became head?

EP: Yeah. Well, when Hattie was there [as head], there was the warehouse gang that had their restroom. And there was a matron down there in charge, under Hattie.

VL: So before you became head matron, when would you folks take your rest breaks?

EP: Well, when I first went there, there was no such thing. Some girls, we used to come up and want to rest little bit, pretend they're unwell. Because they bring their own pads, leave it in their locker. Not everyone come buy the pads, only the ones that didn't have would come buy. So they would come up. Like there was a Mrs. Littlejohn, I think she's still living. One time, she got mad at me because we had the time punch machine. So when they come in, they punch their time, they take their ticket with them. When they come back, they re-punch, drop it in a box. I go figure the time they spent up there [in the bathroom]. Then the matrons tell me, "Helen come all the time." But she's a fighter, you know. And I was just assistant. But I took care of that.

So the head matron asked me one day, "Eh, how come Helen Littlejohn always come in here? She don't always stay her time?"

I say, "She does."

"Where's her tickets?"

So I showed 'em, I kept 'em on the side. Sometimes 20 minutes, so she got called up to the office. Hattie talked to her. "You not supposed to come up like that." And she was getting old lady, too.

So after work, she went outside wait for me and she told somebody, "Tell Peneku, when she get out here I'm going to bust 'em up."

I went but she didn't do anything. I went right after that. I looked at her, "Eh, what's the matter, Helen? You mad?"

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

VL: Okay, so she was waiting for you after work, and what happened?

EP: Yeah, so I went out and I said, "Oh, I hear you mad, Helen. What's the matter?"

She say, "Why you go tell Hattie about the time?"

"I didn't tell her. I checked the time. She asked me, so I showed her your slip."



"You didn't have to do that."

I said, "I'm sorry. You know something, you don't pay me, Dole pays me." Them days, we called Dole "Hawaiian Pine." I said, "Hawaiian Pine pays me. She's boss. She's boss. When she wants the chit, she sees the chit."

She say, "Oh, you're a big fake."

"Fake? Look, you go get the chit." I left the chit upstairs.  
"Your number's on that chit."

VL: What do you call it, a "chit?"

EP: Yeah. One of those little machines that runs just like the cash register up in the supermarkets. But this one is for time. You punched like that.

Well, we used to come in the morning, too. All the matrons have their own card in a caddy. You come over there and you pick up your card, punch your time in. When you go home, you punch out. At the end of the week that goes to the timekeeper.

VL: So everyone who used the bathroom upstairs had to punch in and out?

EP: Yeah. Then we did away with that machine after a while. When I got there I didn't want the machine. Because of this humbug with Helen. Then, when the new boss took over, I tell 'em, "Eh, get that machine out of here. If I can't be this wahine's friend, then talk to their supe if they come up waste too much time." So he had it taken out.

VL: How did you time them after that?

EP: I didn't. They came up. Then they learned, after a while. They would just come when necessary. They going smoke a cigarette, I don't say nothing. And sometimes, they even talking to me. So we was all friends.

VL: It was better without the punch thing?

EP: Yeah. That made bad friends.

VL: What other kind of changes did you put in? You mentioned the pad machine.

EP: Yeah, that was when "Paddy" [David] Ferreira came boss. Ferreira, when he came boss he put in that machine. But oh, used to get stuck all the time. Then they put this hand towel. We didn't have the paper hand towel, we had rag hand towel. They put up the roller. I used to have so much trouble with it, I just knocked it out. And I told 'em, I said, "Look, when I first came here, there

was no things like this. Let's get back to the old style. They want to wipe their hands, use their apron."

That's another thing. When the girls go down to work, the shift changes, I usually stand up at the front door. They go down and [I] just look around. Sometimes you catch somebody with a dirty apron. "Come back."

"I went home yesterday."

I said, "I know, but it's all....look how stiff." You know, the pineapple juice get on, it's almost standing. "Go change that apron."

"Seventy-five cents one apron."

"Sorry, take it home and wash it tomorrow." They go change it. The glove room is crowded with people going down there because I'm sending them out. Because if the guys downstairs catch 'em with a dirty apron, they think I'm neglecting my duty.

VL: Was that your duty, part of your duty?

EP: Yeah. I was to check on their apron, see that all hair under the cap. And we had cute caps. After a while, after nylon came into style, oh, the trouble was all over. Because nylon, you just wash, put on. And by the time I quit, I must have had 10 or 12 uniforms. And they all real nice uniforms because I had easy job. And so I gave some of them to a nurse up in Kuakini Hospital. When my husband was sick--once in a while go in on the ambulance. I went in one day, there was one big heavy haole lady. I said, "Eh, if you don't mind wearing old uniforms, I got some nice ones. I just retired."

She said, "Well, if you don't mind, of course. Bring 'em in." So I took 'em. And most of that, I never buy. They used to give me presents and stuff. I had one good friend live near me, a Mrs. Barboza, she passed away already. And she was always going Liberty House shopping and stuff. She'd buy me slips and panties.

VL: How about the workers, would they ever give you gifts?

EP: We wasn't supposed to accept anything from them. We talked them out of gifts, like that.

VL: Even way back when you first started?

EP: Yeah. Oh, some of them, they bring bentos and stuff like that. Oh! My janitress and my assistant head [matron], in that picture you'll see her, she's Mrs. [Katherine] Leong, still living. Her husband used to get up in the morning fix her breakfast, couple of hotcakes, maybe couple of eggs, and put 'em in one plate for me. She bring 'em down. I come into work, I get breakfast. She said, "I can't

tell K.Y. to stop this, he keeps on doing it for you."

And lunchtime, that's why I'm so crazy for Oriental food. Then there was a---what's that Japanese market? Tamashiro? That was a bunch of friends. That was first Vicky's friends and they got to know me, I'm Bill's sister. So they was very fond of me. When the war broke out they brought me rice by the bags. And she [Uto Tamashiro] was my janitress. And she used to bring me rice balls and okazu, you know. Oh, real nice little things. And Katherine [Leong] used to bring lunch. I quit going eat cafeteria because this kind food was better.

Then the cooks would miss me. "Emma-san, what's the matter, no kaukau?"

"Katherine bring lunch."

"Oh!"

Yeah, plenty friends.

VL: When did we figure you became head matron? What year?

EP: I think it was late 1942, early 1943, around there. But in my [scrap/photo] book, I looked the other day, it said 1948. Not 1948. It was early because when the war broke out, soon after that, this kind workers came from the Mainland and Hattie was a widow. She made friends with one guy. So she put on her high slippers one day and she disappeared. I don't know, maybe she was mad at me for something. But she disappeared.

No, she told me, "I'm going to the main office." And she went. Well, over there we had 10 divisions in Hawaiian Pine. Nine men and one woman, who was the head nurse. That's division heads. So she went up there and asked the president for division head. And he happened to be talking to one superintendent that was in the office with him, a Mr. [Otto] Beerman [cannery superintendent]. He's over Hjelte in the Preparation Department.

I was upstairs. Beerman, "Emma?"

"Yeah?"

He said, "As of 10 minutes ago, you're the head matron of Hawaiian Pine."

I said, "Come on, what's this crap?"

"That's right. Hattie just came up and quit."

Few minutes later, she came down, picked up her purse and few of her things, and walked out. Bill comes behind and he tell me, "Eh, you head matron. Hattie just quit. She went up there and wanted

to be division. And the president said no." I think [Herbert] Cornuelle was president. Anyway, "He said we only have to have 10 divisions, one lady and nine men."

And she said, "Well, if I don't get to be division head here, I quit."

"Thanks for the service, Hattie." That's what he said to her.

VL: Did she want him to make an 11th division head?

EP: Oh, I guess so. She want to be big deal. A couple of years after that, somebody come up one day and told me, "Eh, Hattie's working down warehouse."

So I made a round, go check on my matron down there. I saw her. I said, "What you doing down here? You want your job back, come on up."

She said, "Nah, I no like this. I quit." So she quit. Then not too long after that she passed away.

VL: How did you get to be assistant head matron [approximately 1938 or 1939]?

EP: Because Rose Papa quit. There was a Rose Papa who, when Mr. Cooper was the chief in the employment division, he called each of us in one by one, to find out how much education we had. So I don't know how it got out but he said, "How far did you go in school?"

I said, "Ninth grade."

"What school?"

"Kamehameha." Next day, I see Rose Papa is packing up. She's getting all her things together. She was good friends with Miss Ward who was in charge of the Waimano Home. So she had gone to see Miss Ward that she was going to quit Dole, so she quit.

Oh, then every 10 years or so they give you something. When I quit I got a watch. You choose what you like. I got a nice watch. I foolishly loaned it to somebody and I never got it back. But they give you little pineapple pins and 10 years, plain pin; 20 years, two stones, little emeralds. I get 'em inside someplace. They cute little pineapple pins. What I like to do is make a ring out of one of 'em. But for what? I 76 years old already.

VL: You think Rose Papa quitting had something to do, like she had less education than you?

EP: Yeah. I think she felt bad. Maybe she felt like I was going to get in her shoes or something. But I wasn't banging or anything.

VL: They didn't fire her?

EP: No. And I used to show them every respect.

VL: How about the other matrons? Maybe they could have become assistants. They were several others, eh?

EP: Yeah. But I don't know who....well, when I came head, right away, I picked this lady Mrs. Leong. Then---gee, we won't have time to talk about this the schools.

When I had the schools, you know these Hilo and Maui children that came down [to work in the cannery]? Well, I had Kamehameha School and Mid Pacific Institute, where they lived [for the summer]. I managed that too.

VL: This was just summertime?

EP: Just summertime. And I managed them, too. The Hilo girls came down with a Mrs. Nathaniel who was someway related to my husband. She was a nice lady. She took care of the Hilo girls. But from Maui, nobody sent anybody, so we split the gang. Kamehameha took Hilo, Mid Pacific took Maui. Then I used to go up every day. Because every morning I would send janitresses up; I hired plenty more. I took trimmers out of the Trimming Department. They all come ask me, they like clean house.

VL: They didn't want to be trimmers?

EP: Well, they were good trimmers too. I talk to the boss down there and say, "This lady getting kind of old and I need janitresses. What you think? Summertime get plenty, they can break in some more trimmers."

"Anything you want, you take."

So I got this ladies all extra. Then we had a garage with service cars running. Every morning they come out. Seven o'clock the whistle blow, the janitresses all pile down by the ramp, the cars come in, one go Kamehameha School, one go Mid Pacific. Then in the afternoon, they get back 4 o'clock. They check out.

VL: And what did they do at Kamehameha Schools?

EP: Clean house. Because up Kamehameha School they had five dormitories that the girls lived in. And these ladies would go, just make sure the halls were clean. Because I talk to all the girls when they come. I say, "Look, we all have to sleep nighttime. You guys understand?" That's the way I go talk to them. "So when you get up in the morning, try at least get your bed made, hang up the clothes you got." Then the ladies go up there, they just clean around the floor. Because we got to keep Kamehameha looking good.

I said, "I came from this school." But not up there. When I went to Kamehameha it was down on King Street. And they all were good.

One time, Vicky sent me somebody. "Better check on those kids, they got lice in the head."

So I call the nurse, "What you got for lice?"

"Oh, where are they?"

I said, "Crawling down on the tables. And I think Vicky saw somebody, the bug crawling on the head." Kamehameha School stay home one whole day. Then the nurse and her assistants go up there, soap their head.

VL: All the girls?

EP: Uh huh [yes]. All the girls. We had head inspections. Those that didn't have were cleared, but they had to stay home a whole day for that. Then there were a few that had. Took a soaking. All came all right.

Then we had the buses bring 'em in, every day. They bring 'em down, get there about quarter to seven [6:45] or so the buses get in. Everybody haul upstairs, get into aprons and go work. And if the cannery's going to run over---see, 3:00 the outside let me know what time pau hana. I call up Rapid Transit, bus time. So they come.

VL: Specially chartered?

EP: Yeah, specially chartered.

VL: And who would pay for that?

EP: Dole, I guess. Oh, them days we was making good in pineapple. The girls didn't pay. Then the buses would come in and they all haul out, get taken home. In the morning, the buses go out.

VL: What years did they recruit girls from other islands?

EP: I think was summer of 1942 to 1945. And then, my mother died on the day the war ended. So I was busy. And then the kids missed me and everything. So right after that, they all got hauled back to Hilo and Maui. Yeah, she died August 18, I think. Something like that, the day the war pau, Mother died.

VL: Prior to that, you were intermittent worker? Is that right?

EP: Well, from 1935, when I went in I think I was only seasonal. I don't remember when I came.... Yeah, from 1937 till about the time the war came--see, all that time I was just a matron. There

was this other head and stuff like that. And when the war came and Hattie--no, no, before that. Oh, Rose Papa quit. I forget what year she quit. Maybe 1938 or 1939. When she quit, I became assistant. When Hattie left I stepped up. But she was making 67 cents, they started me with 70 or 72 cents, something like that.

VL: But were you still intermittent, when you were assistant head matron?

EP: Yeah. I worked when the cannery worked.

VL: And then, when you became head matron, then what?

EP: Then I stayed on 40 hours a week. Whether the cannery work or not. But while I was intermittent, when the cannery stopped like that we get--what you call that kind pay?

VL: Compensation?

EP: Compensation. And I made at least \$12 a week compensation. No work. Yeah, intermittents get that.

VL: So when you were a regular, what would you do on the days when the cannery's not working?

EP: Come to work. You see, there was locker rooms all over the place. So I went visit different locker rooms, make sure that my janitresses was cleaning up properly, and check on what they need. New brooms or rubbish containers and stuff like that. I even had one locker room at the garage.

VL: So you would order things for the janitresses?

EP: Yeah. When they need material like that I order it from the store-room. That was easy. Just make out the order, they bring 'em up.

VL: What was the most important part of your job as head matron?

EP: I guess was to make sure nobody's killing anybody. Really....I don't know. Everything into one.

VL: How about, do you have a favorite part of that job that you liked better than other parts?

EP: No, I don't think so. Everything just came naturally, when I was needed over here I was here. Somebody get in trouble over here. Like sometimes, girls faint at the table, stuff like that. They go to the dispensary. Then the nurse would call up, "So and so is sick. Send her things down." Go to her locker, pick up her stuff. I either take it, or if I'm busy I send somebody else or I go. Usually I go because I want to see how bad and what happened.

Like one night, somebody's hand got caught off in the machine. But



it was a boy. Ho man, after they got him to Queen's Hospital or something, they found the glove with the hand inside. Oh, my God. Poor thing.

VL: How were you involved in that?

EP: That was a boy downstairs in Preparation. It was on the canning machine, I think.

VL: Did the men have their own locker room?

EP: Oh yeah, above mine.

VL: Was there a matron for that?

EP: No, not matron. They had a locker attendant. That was Robert Sasaki. You see, he and Mr. [Paddy] Ferreira were good friends from long time. They were both painters. Then he [Sasaki] became janitor boss and this guy [Ferreira] was painter foreman, then he became superintendent. They were always good friends. Then Paddy became my boss too. Then that guy [Sasaki] like boss me. Few days before I retired, I was so mad, I went to my boss and told 'em I quit.

He said, "You can't quit. You going retire in three days." And he said, "What you need is a vacation." So they gave me one month vacation before I quit.

And I was so mad with this guy. He come tell me what to do.

VL: Which one was he?

EP: Bobby Sasaki. He....one Japanese that didn't want to go to war. When the war broke out he was supposed to go report to be a soldier, or something. What you call that? Enlist, yeah. No, he complain he had heart trouble. So we took it he had heart trouble. So every time he come down and he say, "Hey, up here a little bit dirty. The janitress didn't clean."

I said, "Get out of here! When we get around to it they'll clean it." Oh, he used to get in my hair, really. I got so mad at him.

VL: Were you folks supposed to be equal level?

EP: No. I was sort of department head, you know. And he wasn't. He was head janitor. Oh man, he used to make me mad. And then, he used to come fix the broken locks and stuff like that. Then he had two half-German boys, two brothers that worked on combination locks. Oh, those things humbug, too. I never knew how to fix 'em.

VL: What about the [cannery] record player? When did that come in? [Located in the women's locker room. It broadcast music into the cannery.]

EP: Oh, that thing was there....I think, when I went there, it was there. And it was in my office. And (Laughs) you know, I can't ride an escalator. I tell you why. I used to go to Sears to buy the records. And Sears has the escalator. One day, I decided time to go get records. The girls come up, they say, "No more new record?"

So I call the boss. "Eh, I think I better go buy some records."

He said, "Go. Call the company car."

I had my own car but I wasn't going to drive to Sears and waste my gas. So I call the company car. I went to Sears--that's the old Sears, where is now the police station, I think. I got on the escalator, and I went up. From then on, I no ride escalators no more. This thing moving up like that; you know, when I got up there, forget what I went there for. I come right down on the steps and got back in the car and came back to the plant.

VL: You didn't buy anything?

EP: Paddy come, he said, "Where the records?"

I said, "I didn't buy."

He said, "Have you any other suggestions?"

I said, "Yeah."

"What?"

I said, "Here," I pull out my sheet. Send this out to Sears and tell 'em send us all these records. Charge it to the company, to you."

And he said, "Oh, that's the way you want to do it? You don't want to go down there listen?"

"No. Bring 'em over here, play 'em and I can hear."

So then on, that's the way I got my records.

VL: Before that, about how big was your record collection? Before you bought the new ones?

EP: Oh, plenty. Plenty. I had two cases on the side, you know. And up here is the record player. Just crowded with records.

VL: But the girls complained?

EP: Well, they said, "Oh, we hear plenty new records. Why you no try get new records." So I got new records.

Then, "What's the name of the record? What you got?" So I put 'em, and if I didn't get it right, Sears would know what I mean. And they always gave me the records I wanted. Then, one time they put up one system, where it played---like you go into some stores now, they have it up here on the ceiling. Ah, that thing used to make me sick. We only had it for little while. I told 'em, "Take that crap down." Go back to the record player.

VL: Why?

EP: Ah, junk. I think they play it in town someplace. Just like a radio. Only don't talk, just play music. Well, the guy whose playing in town like that kind music but I never used to. Used to make me go crazy.

VL: What kind did the girls like?

EP: The Hawaiian songs. Cowboy songs. I was great for cowboy songs. Like, we sit here [at home] watch television, and you know, they selling records and stuff like that. And they put on one [song] name. And my granddaughter sits over here. And she says, "You know that one, too?"

I say, "Of course."

VL: So you would mostly buy Hawaiian records?

EP: Yeah.

VL: How about the popular ones of those days?

EP: Yeah, of those days, the songs. I used to buy that. Yeah, them was the days.

VL: Did you have to keep changing the record every time?

EP: Yeah. That's why there was a player there all the time. Every time one record pau, you turn 'em over. And that was sort of my job. If I wanted to go someplace, call somebody else change the record.

VL: Did that continue until you retired?

EP: No, I think they gave it up before I retired. I don't know if they have it downstairs now. Maybe they still have the top ones. There's a lot of things I forget, too.

VL: As you became assistant head, and then you became head, did your pay also go up?

EP: Yeah, yeah. And gee whiz, I don't know, but I think by the time I quit in 1967, I must've been getting about \$500. But when I first

came head matron, they told me, "Well, Hattie was getting 67 cents. We give you 70 or 71 cents." I started like that, until the union came in. And once in a while, they make raise. Then, when the union came, in order that I don't join the union, they threw me on salary. At about....I think \$200 a month. (Pause) No, wasn't that much. Maybe \$180. They didn't give me that much. But gradually, every time the union make a fuss and we get a raise, I would get a raise. So by the time I quit was almost \$500. Around that.

VL: Were you thinking about joining the union?

EP: No. Them days, I thought the union waste time. But lately---you know, like my friend, she hasn't worked....you see, I don't know. But the way I feel about it, with the union, if you belong in one department, that's your department. If there's nothing for you to do and you have to stay home, why send you into another department. And if you refuse to go there, they don't pay you. And that's what happened to Clara. So she went to see the union. They were going to bring a case up about that. In the beginning, I thought, "Oh, I didn't want." I figured one boss was enough. I didn't want the union to boss me. But I had a very good friend that was picking up people for the union.

VL: He worked in the cannery?

EP: Yeah. And he was a painter. Before he even had a chance to talk to me, some guy called up and said, "Eh, the union is trying to pick up people. Don't join the union."

VL: Someone told you that?

EP: Yeah. Somebody from the main office. "You stepping into salary, don't join the union." And so, I went to salary. I was just a regular, that time.

VL: Did the other matrons join the union?

EP: Uh uh [no]. I don't think. Because I didn't join, nobody joined the union. The matrons didn't.

And like now, I think there's only one. Margaret, that one. She was my assistant, too. And she's head matron, too, now. But I don't know if she has anybody. Maybe she got somebody to help her with the lockers. If not enough people maybe everybody get their own locker; you can open your own.

But from what I hear, I don't think there's any matron other than this main girl I left.

VL: Fewer people now?

EP: Yeah. They're not running as many tables, and then, everything is

so fast. But I heard that down in the canning department, the label department--that's warehouse--they even labeling cat food. I don't know how true that is.

The storeroom, you only pay nickel for one pineapple. Now, you want pineapple, you pay 23 cents [a pound]. But I never cared for pineapple. I just use it in cooking.

VL: As far as you could tell, how did the workers get along with one another?

EP: Nicely. Nicely, most of them. One time, there's a little argument. Two Filipino ladies. I way in back, somebody call me, "Eh, two ladies fighting." One had a knife. Really sharp knives down there, you know.

VL: She had one of the trimming knives?

EP: Yeah. So we went up. You got to fight your way in the crowd, everybody's trying to hang up against....except the aisles not too wide. So I got to her, and she was waiting for the other lady to come. And I said, "Eh you, what's the matter?"

"Oh, my friend."

I don't know, she's talking Filipino and stuff like that. I said, "And where's the knife you brought? You want to lose your job?"

"No ma'am, no ma'am."

I said, "Okay, give me that knife. Bumbai, you come up there with your friend." I talk to the both of them. There was a little misunderstanding over something. They talk Filipino to one another. I said, "You folks good friend, now."

Oh, "Somebody told me to something." You know, that kind?

So I said, "Ah, forget it. You folks' family good friend. Now Mamas no talk, no good for the children."

"Yeah, no?" One cry, the other one cry. Okay, friend.

So I said, "You know something? I not going tell nobody about this knife."

"Thank you, thank you."

VL: How did you know she had the knife?

EP: Somebody told me she brought it up. You supposed to leave your knife right there. Because now, when the knife girl go down, she going miss one knife over there and make a report.

VL: So you didn't report that?

EP: No, I wasn't wanting to get [them] into trouble. They willing to make friends.

VL: Were there any other incidents besides that?

EP: No. Only one time, I had to throw my glasses. But if I think somebody is mad at somebody else, you could see who you think is right or wrong. I would grab the wrong guy and get 'em to come right with the right guy.

VL: Did you have girls coming to you with personal problems that they would ask you about? Or grievances?

EP: Yeah. Grievances, yeah.

VL: Like what?

EP: One time, one girl came up and she said, "My husband bring my lunch, tell him, 'Eat it!'"

I said, "Why?"

"Oh, he never like stop for the lunch this morning."

I said, "Maybe he thought you would be late. Where you go home?"

She said, "I not even going cook."

"You got children. They got to eat."

"No use. Blew it all." The husband never show up with the lunch. Next morning, she come back, she said, "He was scared for come because I told 'em no bring the lunch."

I said, "Then how you folks now?"

"All right."

VL: Did you know most of the women that went through by name?

EP: No, the names, I forget. Like I met....where was I? Holiday Mart, I think, the other day. And this big stout girl came and grabbed me, "Hello. Emma, that's you, yeah?"

I said, "Yeah."

"Ho, you came so skinny."

And she came so fat. I talked to her, and everything.

"How's Vicky?"

"Fine," and everything. Couldn't find her name. After I come home and I think, oh that's Mitsu. She was assistant under Vicky. Oh, I asked her, "You working?"

"Nah. Quit already. I pension already."

But she knew my name, but I didn't give her the satisfaction that---I didn't know hers.

Yesterday my brother called, and I said, "How's Vicky?"

He said, "Oh, fine."

So I said, "You know, I ran into Mitsu the other day. One of these days, she going come catch fish your place."

And he said, "Okay, okay, I tell Vicky." That was Mitsu. She's gotten so fat. Some people get fat in their old age. Poor me, I no can gain.

VL: So you knew people by face more than names?

EP: By face, yeah. Oh, every time I go supermarkets I meet them. I no only meet them, I belong to Nichiren Shoshu. And I meet this other batch. Now days, I forget names but face, I remember.

VL: How about the summer workers who would come and go?

EP: Yeah, well, usually, the same ones come back every summer. And then, if new ones come, I get to make friends with them. I think all in all, I got along good with the girls there.

VL: I remember reading that article that was written when you retired, and it said something about you had a reputation for being strict. What did they mean by that?

EP: Oh well, the aprons, I think. Because I didn't want the downstairs boss to buck me, for letting this person pass. Some of them try go with slippers. "Uh uh, go back. You no more shoes?"

"Get; my feet kind of sore."

I say, "Okay, go dispensary, fix your feet. Get bandage or something." But maybe you can't work today because they don't allow slippers downstairs. But like now, I don't know. Maybe they wearing slippers. I wear slippers to town, now.

VL: Oh, you mentioned, the last time I was here, that you did some of the girls' taxes. How did that...

EP: My janitresses. But that's the short form. Well, you know, everybody gets what they make, the total of what they make. And I used to just fix; was easy. You subtract the taxes from....I



can't talk unless I see the paper, but yeah, I used to help them with their taxes. And I did all for my kids when they were growing up. I get two step-grandsons, Japanese, Muraoka brothers. They used to go work, I fix their mother's tax, their's. Make all short form. I didn't know how to make the long form. Now, this friend that got me to work, Kanky [Chun]. He used to do my taxes. When it's tax time, he say, "Oh, don't forget bring your tax paper." Them days, we no pay for make tax. They make free. Now, you go for [H&R] Block, you got to pay plenty money.

VL: When you did the janitresses' ones, did they pay you?

EP: No, no. I just did it because we were friends. All of them were my friends. Oh, you should ought to see my gang. I get their pictures inside. The old janitresses. Oh, they were nice. Very, very obedient; oh, they were nice.

VL: They were all under you?

EP: Yeah. If somebody didn't feel well, first they tell me. Then, I give 'em something little bit easy. If they are not well enough to go work, I let 'em go home.

VL: Are you assigning them where to go every day?

EP: Yeah. Not every day. I get a schedule. Just like---I raise my family that way. "You wash the dishes one week," the other guy sweep the floor, and stuff like that. So when somebody don't do their work, you just look up on the schedule, you find out who didn't do it. And every week change. Like I have one boy that never missed making his bed. He kept the neatest space in the whole thing. You know what a punee is?

VL: Yeah.

EP: Two double beds put together. The old house we lived, down Gulick Avenue, had like that. And all the kids sleep. Then my oldest girl started to mense [menstruate] so I put one little single bed on the side. Because we had two bedrooms and this long sleeping. And they would all sleep there. Then there's a parlor between; my husband and I on this side. If somebody got a toothache or something, you can hear. They'll make noise, yeah. And the road is right outside there. Sometimes somebody scared because they think somebody's outside, get up and go look.

But I made scrap blankets out of material. That's what it says inside that thing [article written for her retirement]. I can go back to my needlepoints or something. That's what I used to sneak, do. Everybody go downstairs, everything's quiet. Sew in the back.

VL: Where is this?

EP: In the locker room. Because I get one special little matron's

locker room. And there's lockers in there, and one table in case we want to eat. Sometimes I order lunch inside there and we all eat in there. And that's better than going cafeteria. And so I used to always sew. Two things I did when the cannery was quiet was sew and read. One day, my boss came up and he said, "How much you like for those books?"

"What books? I don't want to sell 'em till I read 'em. Okay, okay, I not going read." But he catch me. I used to crook, you know.

VL: They didn't like you to read or sew?

EP: I couldn't stay this looking at the spaces around when everything's quiet. But I was always there. And then, like I always have a pad, I write down everything.

VL: Was it very often quiet like that?

EP: No. When the cannery's running, well, the ladies, they start, maybe two sweepers come from the back, two from the front, and they bring. Sometimes they leave their mop hanging around, for a little while I got get the mop and I swing 'em. They run over there, "No, no. Emma-san, no. This our job." Just for fun, exercise. I didn't know what to do with myself, really. So I used to sneak out and sew little bit. Before, I used to, I make blanket for all the grandchildren, all my children. Everybody get their own blanket. And when wear out, takes new ones. And now, I get the fit of crocheting that kind. Somebody gave me plenty yarn.

VL: Did you like it when was busy all the time?

EP: Was better when was quiet.

VL: How did you feel about in the summertime, when there were so many more people?

EP: That time, you can't see. Plenty people is right. Girls keep coming up [to the locker room]. If they stay long, I go talk to them. Otherwise, "Hi," "Hi," all day long. Then they want to know something, and they want something, they come ask me. If it's in my power to let them have it, I let 'em.

VL: Like what?

EP: Maybe somebody wants to find something in employment office. "Okay," I give 'em the telephone number.

If the guy down there say, "I want to see you...."

"Can I go there?"

"Yeah, you go."

Then I tell Preparation, "So and so is going out for a few minutes, they'll be back." But I kept in touch with everybody.

VL: By phone?

EP: By phone. 235 was my number. Every little thing I used to---ho, then my first grandson lived with me for, oh, I took care of him from when he came back from the hospital. I even had a babysitter for him and stuff like that. Then, when he started to go school, he went to the Island Paradise. And the truck used to come down our place pick him up, drop him. Then, we had....what's her name? I forget. The telephone operator, calls from outside come in and they give us our department number. Then Gordon [grandson] come back and he would call and she would talk to him and find out all kind things about our house, how we live and everything, then she connect 'em. And I say, "Did you just now get home?"

"No, I was talking to the operator."

Then she would cut in, "Oh, yeah, I know what you had for supper last night."

But I took it for fun, eh. But that's how it was. Now, he's in Florida.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 6-14-2-79

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Emma Peneku (EP)

March 8, 1979

Honolulu, Hawaii

BY: Vivien Lee (VL)

VL: This is an interview with Mrs. Emma Peneku. We're at her home in Honolulu. Today is March 8, 1979.

Okay, so first off, in the last interview, you were saying you needed money even more badly in 1935 when you first started at Hawaiian Pine than you needed earlier in 1926 when you first started at Libby's. Why did you need money even worse in 1935?

EP: Because I think my husband was careless and didn't bring home all his pay. And yet, he was one of the best paid men in Honolulu, as a laborer. He was I think Hawaii's first welder.

VL: He was a welder in 1935...

EP: He was a welder making \$1 an hour. Around 1926. And then, he stayed. And then, I forget what year he quit and he worked for [Honolulu] Gas Company until he retired.

VL: When you started at Hawaiian Pine in 1935, which job was he on at that time?

EP: Oh, let's see. Nineteen thirty-five. I think he was still with Mullen. With the welding company. Was the Mullen outfit. Island Welding.

VL: What kind of expenses did your family have at that time--1935?

EP: When we first bought Colburn Street, that was \$7,500. Down payment. That came out of my father's estate money. Yeah. Because we had his will broken up. I wasn't named in the will, but they fixed it up. So, I got that for down payment. And they said at the time--I forget the Pakes we bought it from--the guy said, "Oh, how about \$25 a month?" In those days, you only make little bit money, you know? Like say, he made at least \$40 a week.

VL: Your husband?

EP: Yeah. He worked 40 hours at \$1 an hour. And we only paid poll tax, \$5 a year. So, they didn't tax us like they do you now. And, I don't know, there just wasn't enough money. I would want to go buy food and things, you know? And we bought furniture for the new house. And he [husband] did all the yard work and all that but I was short of money. And for only 15 and 25 cents an hour, you don't make too much, but it helps in the grocery bill.

VL: That was your pay?

EP: Yeah. But I only worked one day and got \$2.84, I think.

VL: Oh, that time at Libby's?

EP: Yeah. Then, when I went to Dole, I think I started with 20 cents an hour.

VL: Who handled the money in your family?

EP: He, mostly. But there wasn't enough to handle. On payday, when he got paid, he usually went out and bought groceries, and stuff like that. And then, after that, he'd go broke on his own. Oh, it was kind of hard. Now, with things so expensive, there isn't enough money. But in those days, there was enough if you knew how to handle it.

VL: You also had all seven of your children by 1935.

EP: Right. Yeah. I had seven. But you know I tell you, I used to feed those kids on one head of cabbage. Would cost me maybe a nickel, or six cents. And three pork chops--dime apiece--that's 30 cents. That would be our supper. And then, we've always been heavy on rice and rice used to be cheap. But, we're all big eaters, you know? I'd get up in the morning, make breakfast for everybody. When I first went to work, I usually did a lot of night shift work. Oh, I used to put in 12 hours a night. Go in at 6 and knock off 6 o'clock in the morning. Then, I hurry home. Catch the bus, and get the kids off to school. It wasn't easy.

VL: When you first started working again at Hawaiian Pine, did you know that you wouldn't have any more children?

EP: No, I didn't.

VL: Didn't know that. Did you practice any birth control...

EP: No, no. I just didn't.

VL: Did any of your children work at that time to help bring in money?

EP: Oh, the boys used to go caddy on Sundays. You know.

VL: Did they contribute to the family...

EP: Oh, yes. They always brought home their money. One would bring maybe 60 cents, and the other would bring 80 cents. That would go for their lunch money.

VL: And then, how about your pay when you brought it home? Would you give that to your husband?

EP: Uh uh [no]. If he ask me for a buck or two, I give it to him, but....no, I bought food. Mostly. Oh, yeah, couldn't buy clothes and then there was the kids to clothe. And I had four boys. I had a good friend that was a Filipino man. He was good tailor. So, need the clothes of summer, we would ask him up the house. He'd take the boys' measurements and then he'd do all their pants. And those days, the shirts used to be maybe dollar and a quarter [\$1.25] real nice shirt. I used to save money for that. Get the boys and....then my girls went to St. Anthony's School where I had to get their little uniforms. There was no washing machine--you wash by hand. [By about 1930 she got a washing machine.]

VL: How did you pay for their tuition?

EP: Oh, those days, \$3 for each kid.

VL: So you managed that between your husband and yourself?

EP: Yeah. They didn't stay in the Catholic school too long. And then, let's see, I was working at Dole when Leina [EP's daughter] went to Roosevelt. Marian [another daughter] went to Farrington. The boys--I don't think they stayed long enough to graduate.

VL: When you first started in 1935, you did not work year-round, yeah?

EP: No, no. I didn't work year-round until 1937.

VL: Did you have any other side jobs to earn extra money?

EP: No, no. Just Dole Company. We used to call it Hawaiian Pine.

VL: Were you ever able to save money in the early days?

EP: Well, there was a credit union. They helped me a lot too.

VL: Even in 1935 and 1937?

EP: Yeah. And the same guy is down there yet. I found out the other day. John Shinagawa.

VL: So, you would save money through the credit union?

EP: Yeah, they take it off the pay.

VL: How much would you ask them to take off?

EP: Well, all depends. Now, if I have a loan, \$5 go for the loan, maybe \$2 on the saving. Then I had my father. And he was drawing a pension. He gave me \$40 a month for living with me. Then, he got sick for quite a spell. In and out of the hospital. Operations, and whatnot. By the time he died, cost me \$3,000. But little by little, I would go borrow money from the credit union and pay. I tell you one thing, when I retired from Hawaiian Pine, I didn't owe a soul a cent. The only thing I had to pay was the lights and the telephone and the gas. And the water. And then, of course, our new home that we built.

VL: Getting back to when you were still at Colburn, were there any organizations that could have helped you? Like the Japanese have tanomoshi system.

EP: No. Well, I heard about tanomoshi, but I didn't understand so I never joined it.

VL: Did you ever, in those early days, just not have enough money to go get the groceries?

EP: Well, once. Not there [not at Colburn Street]. Once, when I was living on Pinkham. Right near the place I bought. One night--that's supposed to be payday--he comes home with nothing, and we got nothing to eat. But the house I bought, my calabash auntie owned it. So, I went over one evening and asked her if she could spare me \$1 or something because Sam came home, didn't bring anything. Oh, they gave me \$2. So, off to the store I went, and fed the kids. And then, I never used to put up fight, or anything. No use, the money is gone. He used to gamble down on the job, I think. (Pause) Yeah, he was careless with money.

VL: So you had to work then?

EP: Yeah. Well, I wanted to because I was tired of scrimping and trying to get this and that together. The kids were growing up, but we were all eating a little more. My sister-in-law said, "Eh, get chance to be matron, come down." Then I met this friend who was---Hattie, that I mentioned. I met her at a party one night I went. She said, "Yeah, in a few days"---I forget her name was going to quit. So I went down, but, like I told you, I went I think four or five times before Kanky [Chun] gave me the 1627 number. That just rhymes with Colburn--that's the number of Colburn Street house. That's why I can't forget. Then I had this bango. And I held the bango until after the [1947] strike, then they put me on salary.

VL: How about any--at that time when you first started Hawaiian Pine--benefits that the company could give you. Say, did they have medical insurance?



EP: Well, no, not for me. At first, I was a seasonal. If you hurt or anything, you sick, the dispensary take care you for free. They don't charge nothing for that.

VL: But if, say, you got sick at home, you couldn't...

EP: Uh uh. No.

VL: ...go to the dispensary. It's only the job?

EP: Yeah. Then, before I was asthmatic. And I always have to have Dr. Hayes. But he was a good guy.

VL: On the job?

EP: No, no--home.

VL: In 1937, from then on, you would work whenever the cannery worked?

EP: Yeah. That's what they call the intermittents.

VL: Right. Intermittents. You said you received unemployment compensation when you...

EP: Yeah. When the cannery shuts down, you can go get unemployment. And I made at least \$15 a week when the cannery didn't run.

VL: Did you want to go and find another job when the cannery didn't run?

EP: Uh uh [no]. I couldn't because there was so much work at home.

VL: If it wasn't for the compensation...

EP: Oh, that helped. I bought me mattresses. Throw away the old mattress, buy new one. Or re-coat the mattress. The Pacific Mattress Company used to take care my mattresses for me.

VL: But that compensation was still less than what you would have made if you had been working?

EP: Right.

VL: Was that a little harder to get by, then?

EP: No, no. It was all right. Well, you see, by that time, my mother was around. In fact, she came and tried to help us hold Colburn Street, but she couldn't. She bought her own place.

VL: So in the end, you couldn't make the payments on your Colburn Street house?

- EP: Yeah. She sold our little farm up in the country [Kauai] and came down. Then we were back about \$800. So, she paid that up.
- VL: What shift were you on when you just became intermittent? Nineteen thirty-seven?
- EP: Oh, intermittent. I came day shift.
- VL: Day shift, yeah. How did your family feel about your working in the pine?
- EP: Oh, they thought was great. (Laughs) Yeah.
- VL: While you were working day shift, how did you run your household?
- EP: Get up early. Get the kids ready for school, make their breakfast. And then, oh, get up early. Then get down there and punch in 6 o'clock [a.m.].
- VL: So what time would you have to get up?
- EP: Oh, 4:30, 5:00. But see, before I go to bed at night, I get everything ready. And all the kids take a bath in the evening. So in the morning, it's just scrub teeth, wash face. I had one girl that I had to braid the hair. That's Leina, the one live with me [now]. I had to braid her hair because---my cousin, one time, cut her bald head. So when her hair grew, it got so nice and black and grew long. I used to have to get up early in the morning--oh, poor kid sleepy. But I talked to her and fixed that hair before she go school. Then Bernie [another daughter] was big enough and she used to help Marian get into her things.
- VL: So then you would send all the kids off to school...
- EP: No, I leave first for work. Then, of course, Daddy's gone already. But Kellett was the big boy, eh? So, after 7 o'clock, the guys that go school far, got to go.
- VL: Then you would work all day sometimes?
- EP: Well, yeah. Sometimes, go up to 4 o'clock. But the 12-hour shifts was usually nighttime.
- VL: So when you were working day shift, you would get home...
- EP: Yeah. In time to cook supper. And soak clothes one day, and wash it out the next day. (Laughs)
- VL: What other kind of chores did you have?
- EP: Well, for the house? I'd have one guy take care the kitchen.
- VL: One of your kids?

EP: Yeah. Boy or girl--everybody. One slate, you know. Everybody in the morning was supposed to make their beds. If I came home after work and somebody's blanket wasn't folded---see, Hawaiians use a kihei pili. The kids had a big double punee, if you know what I mean--two big beds put together. And the boys slept there. And the two little girls. But when Bernie came young lady, well, I had one little single bed on the side for her. But my best---the boys were good. They always made their bed straight. Francis, especially. I even gave him one little room by himself because he was so orderly. After he [Francis] got out and got married, I had Gordon [grandson], that was just as orderly.

VL: With so many children, you said you had one take care of the kitchen--did you assign other chores to them?

EP: Oh, yes. You see, we had a dining room and over here, open and a garden out there. Well, this guy takes care of the dining room--get the chairs in order, the table got to be clean. The floor. And slanty floors--old house, you know. Then, outside the plants. He waters the plants. One guy go check up on the beds. One guy take care the bathroom, scrub the tub--we never had shower. We had a shower outside, but inside. The tub had to be scrubbed clean--toilet, tub, and all. One guy assigned to bathroom. If I came back and saw a mark around the toilet, call the old man. He look on the list, gets the kid, and come and re-scrub.

VL: You had a written list?

EP: Yeah. I hang 'em in the kitchen.

VL: And then would the kids change their jobs every...

EP: Yeah. In the beginning, I used to make the change. But I put the name where everybody---like say, if I tell you clean bathroom, your name is going to be by the bathroom. If it's dirty, you can't blame nobody else. You supposed to take care of it. And then, they were to all play in the yard. If Sam came home after work and the kids was on the road, watch it. They get a licking. But Sundays, he used to go out shoot marbles with them. Play with them on the road. (Laughs)

VL: Did they have any other chores?

EP: Well, there was one guy that had to make sure there was no rubbish around. Or dog messes or stuff like that. At one time, the old man said, "Oh, our dog didn't do that." He said, "Outside dogs, they don't dirty their own yard, they go dirty somebody else's yard." And the kids, they don't want pick it up, so I usually go pick it up. Like Marian's house. I go up there, and they don't want pick 'em up, so I do 'em. They got two dogs that ran away this morning.

VL: So then when you came home, you had to cook dinner?

EP: Uh huh [yes]. Well, sometimes, when Leina got out---well, Bernie used to---they get the rice cooked and stuff like that. Then, I come home, make the main part of the supper. If there's time, I make a cake or something. They liked it.

VL: Yeah. And then you had to do the laundry?

EP: Yeah.

VL: How about shopping? You said your husband did that?

EP: Yeah. Well, in the beginning, he used to, but after a while, I did it. Because then I was the one that knew what to get. Well, usually, when we was real hard up, there's this Chinese guy that used to come around on a wagon every day. I buy vegetables and stuff. He even got meat and things. I buy 'em from him. So that I don't have to walk down to the store. My husband used to get one car after another. He don't finish paying, they take it away.

VL: How about the household repairs. Who would do that?

EP: Him. One time, he started to repair our old house. Oh, he cut--- you know, the wall like that? And he put braces up. Because all termite. I got so scared the thing might crash in on us that I told him we'd better build a new house. So I looked in the paper and I saw this guy Tsuda--Japanese. Called him up, he came over there. Gave me an estimation and stuff. He said, "\$10,000 enough. Might be little bit over."

I said, "But I no more money."

He said, "Don't worry." He went to Honolulu Savings. Honolulu Savings gave us on one loan.

VL: This is the Gulick Street house?

EP: Yeah. And then I told him I wanted to design the house myself. Oh, was all right. I made the picture of the house--where the bedrooms and you know. I had one case for these things [knick-knacks] built in. Oh, he was good. We fixed everything up. It just took about, I think little over \$9,000. Then the rest of the money, I spent on furniture. But by that time, I was head matron.

VL: Oh, okay. We'll get to that in a little bit, then. When you gave your children the chores, did the boys do certain things and the girls do certain things? I mean...

EP: That one guy would say, "Eh, that was my job last week." Oh no. I go look it [the list], "That's right. Eh, call the other one in."

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

VL: What I meant was, were there certain things that the girls didn't get assigned to, certain things the boys did?

EP: No, no. They did everything. They was all kids. So I just changed the names on the different sections.

VL: And if they didn't do their chores, what would happen?

EP: Then they got to come home and study the rest of the day. They get punished. Yeah.

VL: Did you punish them? Or, did...

EP: No, they know.

VL: ...your husband punish them?

EP: Well, it was his order, but I saw that it was carried. But sometimes, excuse, you know. Like Kellett, he didn't like to wash the dishes. I used to sneak in there and do his dishes for him.

(Laughter)

VL: I see. And then, did the family do things together when you weren't working and when your husband wasn't working?

EP: What kind things?

VL: Oh, outings together or....

EP: Oh, yes. We used to visit Bill [EP's brother]. And then, once in a while, somebody gave a luau and everybody goes.

VL: I was just thinking you were so busy, you know.

EP: No, no. I had my recreations, too. The best was Christmas time when people come serenade. Wow! They don't do that anymore. Oh, you don't remember that--you're too young.

VL: Did you have any feelings about being gone all day and having the children...

EP: Oh, I get worried if I'm not home on time. I keep calling home. One day, Mrs. Borges, my neighbor, called up and said, "Eh, the kids is playing on the roof."

VL: On the roof?

EP: Yeah. And I called them on the telephone, "Who's on the roof?" I forget now. Was the little ones, Francis and I think the girls.

I said, "Okay, Papa's going to hear about this when he gets home." So when I got home, I said, "Eh, who went on the roof today? Tell Daddy who was on the roof."

Take off his strap. "Okay, okay, Daddy. We not going up there no more."

VL: So you would try to keep in phone contact?

EP: Yes. Every day. I have each of them call and---our operator, she got to know them and she used to find out everything that's going on. "You guys did your work? Mama going come home, and you going get it."

"Oh, yeah, yeah. I did mine." She get all the news from Bernie. That's the first girl.

Worse when Gordon got to go to school. That's my grandson. Oh, he went to Island Paradise. Small little guy. And when he get home, he call me. The operator would get him and find out everything that's going on. "What time you go bed last night?"

"Oh, five minutes after 8 [o'clock]."

"Why five minutes after?"

"Because I didn't finish my homework."

"Oh, your grandma strict?"

"Yeah. But I love her."

Then she say, "I was talking to Gordon, but he say he love you."

VL: You said that your neighbor, Mrs. Borges, called you. Did your neighbors kind of watch out for your kids?

EP: I guess they did. Because she must have been---you know that lady still living--over 90. I didn't see that she died--I keep up with obituaries. When she saw the kids, right across the street. Then my husband used to do plenty things for her. Her husband used to work for a post office, then he died. When he fenced our place, he fix us a gate. She wanted it, he took it off and took it over there. He used to go over there. Do little odds and ends for her.

VL: After you became head matron, you became regular at that same time?

EP: Oh, yes.

VL: So that's 40 hours a week?

EP: Yeah.

VL: And that was night shift?

EP: No, day shift. The head always works days.

VL: Being head matron, did that bring about any changes in your home life?

EP: No, it got better because the kids were older. I had no trouble. Oh, when the war broke out, we were in darkness. All Honolulu, no lights.

VL: At night.

EP: At night. We used to have guys come around check if they see light in your house. "Turn it off, turn it off." Because Japanese might come back. That's what we call "the blackout." I think we went a whole year. Because I had big windows. And nothing to cover it, so we was always in darkness. Let me see, the war started in December....well, it was early enough in the evening to get home and hurry up cook before get dark. But there were times when dark and when I hurry up in the kitchen---you know, the kids get the rice cooked. Maybe I just open a can of corned beef with something fast and fill their plates. And everybody go sit under the moonlight and eat. On the front veranda. Oh, was terrible.

But after---I got---what you call da kine? Dungaree. And put 'em on the window so cannot see the light outside. Well, I draw 'em like this daytime. Nighttime, we pull it over. Because the children's room was all windows. Then we had these curtains, that we could have the lights on inside. Those guys used to come around, check. They think we sleeping, but no. I had it perfectly covered, and my big boy saw to it that---oh no, wait a minute, he was in the Army. Anyway, the boys would make sure. Put clothespins if it's windy, so the things no flap. Yeah, we took every precaution, too. I wasn't smoking that time. But my mother used to smoke. She lived in another house--her own house. And when I'm down there and she go light a cigarette, oh, my father come inside and, "No light the cigarette like that. They can see right through the curtain." Because those guys that walk up and down at night go look, you know. Oh, I laugh.

VL: Well, being head matron, you earned more money, yeah?

EP: I started with 70 cents.

VL: How much an increase was that from your assistant head job?

EP: Oh, assistant head, I was making about 47 cents.

VL: That's a pretty big jump, then.

EP: When Hattie left, she was only making 67 cents. They gave me three more. Got 70 cents.



VL: How did that affect your finances?

EP: Oh, that helped. Yeah, that helped. When the [1947] strike came on, in order that I don't join the union, they put me on salary. I think was \$250 a month.

VL: How about being a head matron, did that affect your relation with your co-workers? The other matrons?

EP: No.

VL: Because you were promoted?

EP: No, they liked it. Because the other one was hardhead, you know. They were glad when she quit. Because I just got along like them. I wasn't a star. Like, we helped in the cafeteria. Okay, now instead of go call 'em, go down cafeteria. They miss me on the floor. I mean, they starting to pick up dishes and everything. Everybody come in. I want somebody to do something, I really don't tell 'em. I go do it. Like, once in a while, I feel that maybe the janitress isn't feeling good and she's mopping the floors. I sneak in the back and I get a mop, wet 'em, and I mop the floors. Oh, they come, "No, no, no. This our job."

And I say, "Well, maybe I like be janitress. That's okay. I help you."

"No, no, no." The other guys come. Everybody help if somebody not feeling good. Because I had old ladies, janitresses, you know.

Even yardmen, I had the old men. I used to take care that because by that time, I had a different superintendent. In the beginning, it was Mr. Levey. He bossed the cafeteria and the matrons. I think Hattie quit before he quit. I used to go to the silver room, wipe the silver. I get tired doing nothing. So I walk around and do something. I used to go check lockers. Like, everybody got lockers to check. I got so many matrons in one room and then, foreladies' room. There's the can plant and the warehouse. The little garage, well, we didn't bother too much with them because in the beginning, they all had keys. But when we wen put on the combinations, oh, that's when I worked. That's how the eyes got so bad. Teaching everybody combinations. And, shee, one room, get 3,000 lockers. Double-deckers. I used to teach, teach. I teach the other matrons how, too. And they would help me.

VL: How about your relation with the regular workers? Did that change when you became head matron?

EP: Yeah. You should go store with me now. They walk in to me in the store and, oh, so happy to see me. I got along good with everybody. Except that one time that---I told you about the fight, yeah? Well, I still got along good. Those girls came back and we were friends.

VL: Now, how about your supervisors? You said first was Mr. Levey. Can you sort of tell me who they were, and the differences and...

EP: Well, Levey took care of the cafeteria. And the matrons, in the beginning, yeah? He was our top boss. When I first went over there to make sandwiches, you know, I get nervous. I want to be sure I make it right. They teach you how to pack the sandwiches. I think was one of the first days I went there, dropped a milk bottle. They used to have the little milk bottles. I dropped it, the darn thing busted. On the floor. So, I ran inside, get one dustpan, mop and the dustpan broom. So I come up, and he was standing around. Watching the matrons, you know. When the bottle fell down, he went, "Oh!"

And I said, "Oh, I'm sorry. That's a dime." No count the bottle, but the milk. Dime a bottle, eh? He see me coming with the mop and everything. I sucked up all the milk on the mop.

(Visitor arrives. Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

EP: And so, where was I? Oh, I came over there and I sucked up all the milk. Then, with the dust broom, I got all the glass inside. He scratched his head. He disappeared little while. He went inside, talk to Hattie. Hattie came by the door, she looked down and she smiled. I didn't hear, but one day Mr. [Otto] Beerman [cannery superintendent] came in to answer the telephone. The big shots had auto calls and...

VL: "Auto calls?" What is that?

EP: Yeah. When they get a telephone call, they not in their office, they in the plant. So, so many blows for each one. One day he came in and answered an auto call and he said, "Emma, who ever taught you of sucking up the milk off the floor before you pick up the broken glass?"

I said, "Taught me? Nobody."

He said, "You know something? Levey damn near went crazy. He didn't think anybody would do that. Everybody else break glasses. They either kick it around, or pick it up. Halfway. But, gee, that's brains." He said, "When I come into a family, I'm going to teach them how to pick up glass." He said, "Who taught you that?"

I said, "Nobody." I said, "How you going get milk in a dust pan?" Da kine dust pan I use was the yard kind. And it's not flat on the floor--little wavy. So he going blow the milk all over the place. But Levey couldn't get over it. Paddy [Ferreira] teased me about it, too.

VL: Now, Beerman is....

EP: Beerman was a superintendent of the cannery.

VL: Oh. He was over Levey?

EP: No. Same capacity. There were nine of those men. And one lady. [Ten department heads; equal in rank] That's why Hattie quit. She wanted to be like that.

VL: Right. You mentioned that.

EP: But, they said, "No, no." Mrs. [Mildred] Hatchell was the head nurse. And she was the only one. Nine others.

VL: After Levey....

EP: After Levey, there came another Japanese guy in there. I can't remember him too well. I can't even remember his name. But Levey, I knew his whole family. There's one guy running now, whose father was down there. Forget his name.

VL: And you mentioned that there was a change to Utility Department, or something?

EP: Oh, yes. Well, see, this guy Paddy Ferreira--David Ferreira, really. He was the boss of the carpenter shop. Then when Levey was planning to quit, they took Utilities and put it under Paddy. So, Paddy became our boss. He had the whole yard. They put somebody else to take care the Carpenter and Paint Department. He took care of all the yard. We had a beautiful yard.

VL: Were you able to make suggestions to your bosses?

EP: At any time. If I thought of something we should have, could try. And they would always go with me. If they thought that something wasn't right and asked me about it.

(Tape stops, then resumes.)

VL: Who was your next boss?

EP: Linx Wilder.

VL: Was there any difference between him and Ferreira?

EP: Oh, he was quiet, he didn't bother. Very seldom he---mostly, he came to say hello. Oh, and another thing. People used to lose jewelry. Oh, some damn nice diamond rings, and stuff like that. Well, some people, they bring it in, and I got it over there. I don't advertise. But everybody know, if you lose something, go see if Emma's got it. They come over, and I let them describe the thing. Maybe I've seen that girl with that ring, or something. Then I take it out. "Is this it?"

"Yeah. Who turned it in?"

"So-and-so." I said, "When you find the girl, thank her for it, eh?" That's all. I give it back to her. Lot of people lose things. People take one another's lunch.

VL: Yeah. You were telling me about that in the last interview.

EP: And they still have the lunch heater. Clara [DeCosta] told me.

VL: Going back to the war years, working in the cannery, did you folks have air raid drills?

EP: Yeah.

VL: Can you describe those?

EP: Well, they'd---no, no. Wait, now. They didn't exactly have drill in the cannery. (Pause) No, they couldn't. (Pause) No, no. They didn't have no drills. But we had to go to---what you call that kind? Red Cross classes.

VL: Oh, everyone in the cannery?

EP: No, no. Just certain ones who was interested. They had a class where a nurse would come and talk to us. How to revive guys that faint and things like that. Because sometimes, people drop right at the table.

VL: You did this during the war?

EP: Yeah.

VL: Was that on work time, so you were paid for that?

EP: Yeah. That, like when I go off to something like that, there's always somebody there. Because I always had one assistant with me. During the day. And nighttime, one would run her shift. Whatever go on in the night shift, leave it in writing or talk to me about it in the morning.

VL: How about gas masks? Did you have to carry those around?

EP: No. No, we didn't have gas masks.

VL: So, your work at the cannery wasn't affected that much by the war?

EP: No, it wasn't at all. Nothing happened. Just the blowup around Pearl Harbor. The [1947] strike was worse. I mean, not worse, but people calling down one another. "Scab this, scab that," you know? That's when I told you I got the Maui and Hilo girls down during the war.

VL: Right. That was one effect [of the war], I guess. How about any problems with the Japanese workers or the Filipino workers?

EP: No, nothing. They didn't seem to understand, I think. Of course, the girls that ever had a little education....but nobody drew a hard face on anybody. The Japanese were scared that maybe people would hate 'em, or something. But, no. My gang was all calm.

VL: Since we're talking about the strike, maybe you can tell me if you can remember the first time you ever heard about the ILWU [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union]?

EP: Well, one morning, I went to work. The first day of the strike. I didn't know. Oh, few days before that, my friend, Gilbert Furusho, he came tell me, "You know, we get union. Join the union."

I said, "What's a union?"

And he said, "More pay."

VL: You didn't know what a union was...

EP: No, I didn't know. And I said, "No." I think the bosses knew that Gilbert was my friend. He was in the paint shop. And when I first went to work, we was good friends, so he used to sometimes pick me up. After work, I wait for him. He pau work and we go. He'd drop me home. So, somebody I think saw him talking to me. Anyway, the first morning of the strike, I come down. Get off the bus, and walk--get off King Street and walk down Akepo Lane. I come down there, everybody outside the cannery. This is oh, about 10 minutes to 6 [5:50 a.m.]. Instead of them going inside, there was one line walking back and forth. I come across this guard station, right there. I went into the guard station. Oh, these guys in line and everything. And they tell me, "Hi."

I said, "What you guys doing?"

They said, "This union strike. You no can go inside."

I said, "Why?"

"Because nobody going work today." Just then, Neal was walking--Blaisdell. He was walking out. He must have seen me come down the steps. There's a steps to come down onto Dillingham. Then you cross the street to Hawaiian Pine. So, he came and he said, "Good morning, Emma."

I said, "Good morning."

He said, "How you this morning?"

I said, "Fine."

He said, "You see all this gang around here?"

And I said, "Yeah. What's it all about?"

He said, "You'll find out later." The union leaders....what's his name? The first big union guy? He was standing right there. He told Blaisdell, "Hello." Blaisdell just grab my hand like that and we walked in. Nobody said nothing. I get inside, from the window, I look outside. The crowd was getting bigger. Nobody come inside.

Then, I saw the paddy wagon--the policemen. My sister-in-law [Vicky Hanaike] came. They stopped her. She put out a fight out there. Somebody called the cops. They took I think three or four guys down. They just took 'em little ways--in the paddy wagon. I don't know if they really took 'em to police station. But, Blaisdell had to go out again and bring Vicky in. Vicky was the head of the [trimming] department. She went over there and she made a fuss about this whole thing. I came over there, and I talked nice to them. They tell me, "You not going work today."

I said, "But I got to get inside."

They said, "No, no. We get union now."

And I said, "Union? What the hell is union?"

"You no like more money?"

I said, "Nah. Bumbai the company going give more money." Blaisdell comes along. I quit [talking] right there. But because of Vicky, there was a humbug. They was trying to stop her from going inside, and she was trying to fight her way in. She didn't get hurt or anything. But the paddy wagon took away couple of boys.

VL: Were there women on this line?

EP: Yeah. Women.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

VL: So you think that there were no hard feelings when Blaisdell took you through the lines?

EP: No, no.

VL: Can you say again about on the [strike] weekend, that Sunday, they took you all out to the fields? Did they take the other matrons, too?

EP: Yeah. Anybody who wanted to go. We went out there to Wahiawa.

Girls loved it. Pick pineapples. There's that big machine that moves along as they pick. They'll drop it into the machine and that gets back into the trucks.

VL: Just that one day?

EP: Yeah. Just one day.

VL: Was anybody telling you how to do the work?

EP: Well, I guess, yes. They were teaching the girls how to dump it.

VL: Who was teaching them?

EP: I think there were a few old pickers--the real pickers out there. Getting them used to the machine. Because you break the pineapple, then you snap off the head [crown]. I think they do it on the knee and throw it in. Because you don't bring the heads to the cannery. Too much junk.

VL: Did some people stay behind in the cannery?

EP: No, no. The cannery didn't run that day.

VL: So, everybody went out there?

EP: Yeah. Something like, maybe two truckloads of people. Yeah, that was a great day out in Wahiawa.

VL: And you got to deliver food to everybody?

EP: Yeah. Takeout food.

VL: That day, was the food free then?

EP: Oh, yes.

VL: Were you folks paid extra for that?

EP: Not extra. But we were paid. We didn't do it for free.

VL: It was your regular wages.

EP: Yes.

VL: Did they have picketers out in the field, too?

EP: I don't remember that there were. I don't think they thought we would go out on a Sunday like that.

VL: That Sunday, were the picketers down at the cannery?



EP: You know something? I don't remember. Because when the cannery don't run, maybe couple of guys stand around. But they don't keep picketing when there's nobody to come to work. Because as a rule, they don't work on Sundays.

VL: So, it was mostly just that first day that there were so many people?

EP: Yeah. Like the only time is when the cannery runs that lot of people come down.

VL: So, did you ever see anybody calling somebody a scab, or...

EP: Oh, yes.

VL: When was that?

EP: Well, see, our bathroom's upstairs. So now they on the picket line. They come in to use the bathroom, especially the boys. They pass the girls' locker room. You could see the ramp. You standing by the window, they call you scab. I got called scab. I just smiled. (Laughs)

VL: Did those people that called you scab, did they know you? Did you know them?

EP: No. I can't say that they called me scab, but there was some other people peeping out windows. Then the girls who go in front, "They called me scab."

I said, "That's okay. Don't say nothing to them." I said, "This will blow over after a while."

VL: Did you think that the union would accomplish anything by striking?

EP: Well, I think they did. Our pays got raised.

VL: Yours, too?

EP: Yeah---well, they put me on salary.

VL: What did you think about the union at that time?

EP: I not sure I thought anything special. Only I was sure that I didn't want to join it.

VL: Why were you so sure?

EP: Because I guess I had aloha for my company. They were good to me. I got my raises and change positions. Few people come in and start with trimming and eventually get up to head matron. So, I was grateful for that.

VL: After the strike was over, did you notice any change in the way that the regular workers felt?

EP: They all seem to have been friendly to me. As far as I'm concerned, no more little arguments and scraps about "You join union and I didn't" stuff like that. No, I didn't see any of that. They probably did it downstairs, but up in the locker room, everybody was everybody's friend.

(Microphone adjusted. Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

VL: Now when they made you salary, did you get a raise?

EP: Gee, I don't know. I can't remember, but I think they started me off at about \$190.

VL: A month?

EP: A month.

VL: What difference did it make for you being regular or being salaried? Because you were already a regular worker?

EP: Yeah. Well, when they put you salary, it means that you sort of come up a bracket, I think. Because in wage, you don't get paid until the end of the month. And I never cashed one check. Right--- as soon as payday came---I started a bank account in 1953. From then on until today, everything goes to the bank. I can't keep no money home. Because I go broke and starve. (Laughs)

VL: How did you feel about becoming salaried?

EP: Proud, I guess. Well, all the heads got that, too. Vicky. And then, couple of Japanese girls--the Kozuki sisters, they were head foreladies, too. Just the heads. Went on salary. The rest was still hourly paid.

VL: Then, when you bought your Gulick Street house, how did you finance that?

EP: Finance it? I borrowed money from the Honolulu Savings. Ten thousand dollars.

VL: You mentioned once before that it was almost all your salary that paid for the house.

EP: Yeah, right. Because see, when I got paid, I deposit the money and right away I make the check. In the beginning, I started to pay \$85 or \$86 a month. On the \$10,000 loan. But they fixed it up where my collateral was the land. Because I paid \$6,500 for the land. And after I owned the land, we just threw down the house. Build a new house. So that was the collateral. Through the Honolulu Savings. My payments weren't too big. Up to when I retired in

1967, I was still paying.

I just finished paying a couple of months before my husband passed away [1970]. But by that time, he went in 1953--he went to the hospital. When he got well, there was something wrong with his heart. So the doctor said he couldn't take a pension. Gas Company paid him and he got Social Security and stuff like that. Of course, bumbai he got not so good in the head. Where I deposited all the money. After that, he never went.

Then he went to the home. Oh, then I went on welfare a little bit. Because when he went to Maluhia [Hospital], it cost \$700--I think--and \$50 a month. I went to talk to them up in the hospital. I told them how much we make and everything, they said, "No. Your money is yours." But his pension goes to the thing, and welfare put in the rest. Now when he died, the balance of \$35--they sent me a billing, I paid that one. By the time I quit the cannery, like I told you, I didn't owe anybody anything. I paid all my bills and got straight. Until today. I don't want owe nobody. As soon as I get my money, I pay all my utilities, my maintenance, and everything.

VL: How did you manage financially after your husband quit and started drawing a pension?

EP: Oh, from then on was easy, because I got all his pension. I put it in the bank, pay the bills.

VL: It was easier than when he was working?

EP: Yeah. Well, you see, while he was home, he was still getting his checks, because he's home--he get the mailman, eh? He cash his checks. But I was taking salary, so we got along. Like I told you, the house installment was so cheap--\$85. And by that time, my girls were in service, and they sent me home money. They were both 18 years old when they went into service. They're still with the U.S. [United States] government. One works for IRS [Internal Revenue Service] and the other works Diamond Head. FAA [Federal Aviation Administration].

VL: Did you start the Dole Softball Babes?

EP: No. You mean the ball games?

VL: Yeah. Softball.

EP: No. Oh, gee, I even got a picture of them. (Laughs) They...

VL: What were you?

EP: Nothing. I just got in and be their friend if they needed drinks and stuff like that. Cold drinks. Like lemonade and things like

that. Sometimes I go see 'em play, but I had nothing to do with the games.

VL: Was that a company-sponsored team?

EP: No, I was no sponsor. They had their own little captains and I just saw to it that if they went to practice and was time to come to work, that they get there on time and get down to the tables. That was the only thing. Because the pineapples don't stop. When they say you start at 7 [o'clock], the whistle blow, and the tables go. And everybody's got to be in their places. Sometimes if the girls were a little late, I would pull 'em on the side, talk to them. Come in long enough to take the shower or something, get ready for work.

VL: They would play softball before work?

EP: Well, sometimes in the afternoon, on the second shift. They would practice little bit. But that didn't last for too long. I think one of my girls was in that, too. I saw to that they went to work with clean aprons and caps. Hair under the cap, no slippers--shoes.

VL: Now you said that your "girls." Does that mean your daughters worked in the cannery, too?

EP: Oh, yes. According to Leina, she started packing. She couldn't trim. Marian was a trimmer for little bit. They only work little while. Then they went into service. When they were 16, go work so they bring home their pay, huh? By the time they were 18, they went enlist in service. One was a Marine, the other was in the Air Corps.

VL: Did you encourage them to work at the cannery?

EP: No, they wanted to. Because all the other kids in school went down to try and get into work. Leina worked in the Storage Department for a while. Under, I think, Sam Suzuki. She liked it.

VL: How do you feel overall about all your years at the cannery?

EP: Proud of 'em. Yeah. No regrets.

VL: What do you think was the best thing about working there?

EP: I guess that everybody was nice. (Pause) Like if somebody got sick, I'd call dispensary and give 'em notice that somebody's coming in. If I knew about it. If that is somebody who had to go home---go home, the nurse would call me. I got my file to work on--I can pick up the girl's things, and send a matron down. And get her ready to go off.

One night, a lady from Hauula got a call that her little girl was sick. And, oh, I was worried. I thought, "She got to get home." The family called and said they think the child was dying. So, I called Henry [Kamaoha]--Hawaiian guy that works down where the cars are. He brings the gang in from Kahuku side. On the big truck, every morning. But this was nighttime, and the lady was on night shift. I got the call, oh, gee, early. So I called the garage. I said, "Look, I got something important." I wasn't head matron then. I said, "There's a lady working here whose little daughter is hurt or very sick or something. They have to have her. So many miles away. What can you do about it?"

The garage guy said, "Get the lady ready, and bring her to the lower ramp." I called her off the table. I didn't tell her. I didn't want to worry her all the way out.

So I said, "Look, Ma, you have to home." Big, fat lady. Forget her name already. Hawaiian lady. I said, "You have to go home. There's something wrong with your family. They called in. And they cannot wait until after shift. So, one boy on the company cars will take you home."

She, "Oh, thank you. Thank you." I think she know the kid was sick. I went with her. Help her get her gloves all washed, hang it in her locker, get her purse, and took her down. By that time, the car was waiting and she was taken home. She get home, the kid died.

VL: All the way to Hauula?

EP: And next morning, I explained it. It's okay.

VL: You explained to a boss, or something?

EP: Yeah. I told my boss. And he got me the garage guy. I think it even went to the president. Cornuelle said, "That was the only thing to do, Emma. Good thing you didn't have to wake me up to tell me about it."

I said, "Well, I didn't think was---" This was 1 o'clock in the morning. And they not getting through until 5 [a.m.]. The lady got home just in time the baby died. But she saw it alive. Yeah. Forget the name.

VL: How do feel about Dole as your employer for all those years?

EP: Beautiful, beautiful. At that time, it was Hawaiian Pineapple Company. Beautiful. No regrets.

VL: Did you have any bad parts about the job?

EP: No, not about the job. But one time, Mr. [Robert] Healy [Preparation superintendent], he waited for the girls one night. Like I

say, the machines run, the pineapples come. And the girls not in their place. So he come upstairs and he started screaming at me. "Where's all the girls?"

I said, "They coming. You get out of here." I said, "I'm not holding anybody up. But that's what it is." I said, "Some girls come a little late. I'm not to blame for it. So get down there and wait. You going to get 'em."

So, he got mad and he went out. Couple of weeks later--this was in the summertime--we decided to go on a picnic. Down in Kailua. Oh boy, the trucks come to pick us up. And there's Mr. Healy. So we went and he wasn't talking to me. I mean, we wasn't too friendly since maybe I got fresh with him. We get down there and he went in the water, wade a little bit. Then, I don't know, he got hurt or something. He dragged himself up on the sand. Even though I was mad---oh, he got a cut on his foot. I went over there, and I said, "Oh, Mr. Healy, what's the matter?" He said, oh, he must have stepped on rock. All the trucks got the first aid kit. Like I told you, they taught us first aid, eh? Well, this was my chance to fix it up. Well, the salt water--now this the Hawaiian part of me--salt water is clean water. Some guys help me get him up on the sand. And I bandaged his foot.

He tell me, "Oh, thank you, Emma."

I said, "Does it hurt now?"

He said, "Well, little bit. But it's a lot better." I strapped it kind of tight.

I said, "Well, okay, limp. Come under the tree, I give you something to eat." I went fix up something and I gave him.

Then I told the gang, "Eh, you folks hurry up, eat your lunch. Mr. Healy's hurt. He not feeling too good. We don't have to stay until 5 o'clock. We go home little bit early, okay?" Okay. Everybody agree. So we came home, bring him home. I think somebody help him drive his car home. But then, after that, we friends.

But he got mad that time I actually kicked him out of the locker room. Because he come up screaming at me. Everybody got their own walking power. So, who am I to---I keep telling, "Hurry up, you guys. Get downstairs." (Laughs)

VL: There were no real bad parts to your job?

EP: No, no. One night, I heard about an accident. The nurse called up. She said, "You wouldn't believe it. But one boy got his hand cut off in the double-seamer machine."

I said, "Oh no."

"Yeah." So they got the ambulance, took 'em to the hospital.

Little while after, she said, "Guess what?"

"Oh no, not another one."

She said, "No, the hand came in. Too late, the body went."  
(Laughs) I laugh. The nurse went---she rushed it [the hand] down, but was too late. I think his hand got cut right off. I don't know, but that's what I heard. Oh, poor guy. I think that guy got paid well for that.

VL: What besides money did you gain from your job, do you think? Anything?

EP: No more money. Just---I guess, little personality. I mix with so many people. I can tell grudges from other people but. Some guys, maybe they don't care too much about you, but if you talk nice to them, they can't swear or anything at you. Anyway, no trouble. There was some pretty tough girls, too. But, not to me.

VL: Would you encourage other women today to go work down cannery?

EP: Any time. Any time.

VL: And to make a career out of it?

EP: Sure. If I had a chance to. I know a lady now that visits me every day. She brings me things. She went to work there in 1953. She's Japanese widow. She visits me.

I go to the supermarkets, and I run into everybody. Not too long ago at Holiday Mart, I saw a girl coming. I was going look for yarn. I wanted a yellow--I can't tell colors so good. I didn't look at her face--she was just wheeling in. I look, she was nicely dressed. So I said, "Oh, hi."

She said, "Hi."

I said, "Can you pick one yellow yarn for me?"

She said, "Sure, this is yellow."

"Oh, oh," I said, "thank you." Then I looked at her again.

She tell me, "You not Emma, yeah?"

I said, "I am. Got little bit skinny, lost my teeth, but I'm Emma." She told me who she was, I forget now. But she's so pretty. And I said, "You worked down Hawaiian Pine?"

She said, "Yeah." We talked. I bump into lot of people that's



working, some are already retired. Yeah. Almost every time I go to the market.

VL: What are your feelings about being retired now?

EP: Well, more time to worry among my family. Before, I can tell 'em what to do, now I don't try. I just go along with them. When they little, I tell 'em, "Don't do this." But now, compromise.

VL: Do you have any thoughts about what the future of the pineapple industry in Hawaii is?

EP: No, but I like to see it go on.

END OF INTERVIEW

[Mrs. Peneku wanted to add this story to her transcripts. It was written April 23, 1979. She does not remember what year the event occurred.]

I visited Vicky [Hanaïke--EP's sister-in-law and retired trimming forelady] yesterday and, of course, we talked of old times.

Once, the big shots decided to treat the Heads (foreladies and me). We had 48 tables and that many foreladies, so they divided us. Half went to Wahiawa; the other went to Lanai. Vicky was in the Lanai gang. All happy, they boarded the plane and took off. When they were over Diamond Head, Vicky said that she felt funny, like something was about to happen to them. She said it was very scary, so she told the stewardess, "Go tell that pilot turn back." Maybe he thought she was sick or something; he did turn back. When they got back to the airport, there was really something wrong with the plane, so they all changed planes and started off again. First, everyone was quiet until they passed Diamond Head, then the rest of the trip was beautiful.

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**ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**Ethnic Studies Program  
University of Hawaii, Manoa**

**June 1979**